

Hafa Adai!

IPI files counterclaims against former contractor. **PAGE 2**
PH: Mandatory 14-day quarantine for returning OFWs. **PAGE 3**

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Two more in NMI recover

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Two more joined the list of recoveries yesterday, six days after the first nine individuals who recovered from COVID-19 in the CNMI were released from the Kanoa Resort isolation site in Susupe last April 15.

As of 6pm yesterday, there were no additional information on the two individuals who were recently released.

According to Esther Muña, chief executive officer of the Common-

wealth Healthcare Corp., the newly released individuals will be given a certificate that indicates that they have been "cleared." They are, how-

See TWO on Page 4

FREE MEALS

McDonald's Saipan is giving away free meals to health care workers and first responders for two weeks from April 22 to May 5 via its "Thank You Meals," which was launched yesterday at the McDonald's Middle Road branch. In this photo, police officers avail of their "Thank You Meal."

BEA CABRERA

Story on Page 7



AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, April 22, 2020**

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	136	0	136
Recovered	114	0	114
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	9	2	11
Negative	51	0	51
Deaths	2	0	2

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt

**No new case has been identified on both islands; Saipan has two more recoveries.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

It's unanimous: MPLT loan is a go

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Board of Education came to a unanimous decision to approve the board resolution needed to process the Public School System's application for a loan with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

Board chair Janice Tenorio and vice chair Herman Atalig, who initially opposed the approval of the resolution that resulted in the 2-2 deadlock last Tuesday, had a change of heart and voted "yes" during another meeting yesterday.

Board members Marylou Ada, See MPLT on Page 4

Bill guaranteeing retirees' 25% to be amended

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

An amendment is brewing for a House bill that would guarantee 25% of the retiree pension through

a \$15-million allotment from the casino license fees.

The decision came after much deliberation from the legislators during a Senate session last Tuesday, which ended with House Bill 21-76, HS1 being referred to the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, chaired by Senate vice president Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian).

Hofschneider clarified during the session that he supports funding

See BILL on Page 4

Some US producers, states reopening amid political pressure

By COLLEEN LONG, GENE JOHNSON
and MIKE CORDER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE (AP)—Boeing and at least one other U.S. heavy-equipment manufacturer resumed production and some states rolled out aggressive reopening plans Monday, despite nationwide concerns there is not enough testing yet to keep the coronavirus from rebounding.

In one of the most forceful moves

See SOME on Page 4

INSIDE



NATION

President Trump has announced a "temporary suspension of immigration into the United States."

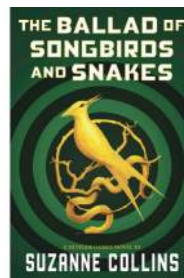
PAGE 12



ASIA

Few Southeast Asian nations enacted serious measures to contain the coronavirus until recently.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

The next "Hunger Games" book is coming out and a movie version is now being planned.

PAGE 15



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Local

GRIM REMINDERS

The ruined hulk of the Northern Marianas College gym and the tents in front of it that serve as temporary classrooms remain a grim reminder that the college and its students are still struggling with the residual challenges of Super Typhoon Yutu even as they grapple with the new challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA



IPI files counterclaims against former contractor

» **IPI alleges that Pacific Rim hired kitchen helper, delivery man to work as carpenters at casino-resort project**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has filed counterclaims against its former contractor, Pacific Rim Land Development LLC.

IPI, alleging, among other things, that Pacific Rim hired a kitchen helper and a delivery man and made them work in IPI's casino-resort project in Garapan as carpenters.

IPI, through counsel Cong Nie, brought counterclaims against Pacific Rim for promissory fraud, fraud in the inducement as to the promissory note, violation of Consumer Protection Act, and breach of contract.

IPI asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to issue an order for rescission of IPI's contract with Pacific Rim and the promissory note.

IPI also asked the court to hold Pacific Rim liable to pay damages in an amount to be proven at trial; the company wants a jury trial.

Pacific Rim, through counsel Colin Thompson, is suing IPI and five unnamed alleged co-conspirators for breach of contract (construction and promissory note), and unjust enrichment.

Pacific Rim claimed to have substantially completed or completed the agreed-upon work on Sept. 30, 2018 and that IPI owes Pacific Rim

\$5.65 million, but wants to collect from IPI approximately \$10 million in damages that would be proven at trial. Pacific Rim also filed an application for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on. A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

According to Nie in IPI's counterclaims, IPI did not discover Pacific Rim's fraudulent intent prior to April 16, 2018, and therefore its promissory fraud claim is timely.

Nie said Pacific Rim knowingly misrepresented the trade categories of its employees in its monthly invoices and deliberately omitted to disclose when submitting its monthly invoices that its workforce "did not perform work in a manner as efficient or competent as those of ordinary skill, competency, and standing in the corresponding trades."

By entering the contract without the intent to perform its promises, Pacific Rim engaged in unfair and deceptive acts in its business operations, Nie said.

The lawyer said in the event that the contract is found to be valid and enforceable, Pacific Rim has breached the contract by failing to perform its promises—promises that include to

implement a construction plan to substantially complete all construction on or before May 31, 2019, and assign qualified personnel.

Nie cited the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion Act in August 2017, which effectively imposed a ban on CNMI businesses using the CW-1 visa category to hire new construction workers. Since before the NMIEEA became law, there had already been a shortage of qualified construction workers and related personnel in the CNMI, he said, and its passage made it extremely difficult for large-scale construction projects in the CNMI.

At that time, IPI was under a deadline, pursuant to its agreement with the CNMI government, to complete its hotel-casino project in Garapan, and urgently needed a general contractor who could finish the project timely and completely.

In 2017, Pacific Rim proposed to IPI that it could and would act as the general contractor of the project, Nie said. On Feb. 13, 2018, Pacific Rim and IPI executed a written contract for construction of the project. In the contract, Nie noted, Pacific Rim promised to perform the scope of work defined in the contract, including implementing a construction plan to substantially complete all construction on

or before May 31, 2019, and supervising other contractors and subcontractors working on that project, as the general contractor.

After executing the contract, Nie said, Pacific Rim started to recruit workers for the project. He cited Pacific Rim's hiring of a person with the initials P.P. to work on the project. Prior to being hired by Pacific Rim, P.P. was allegedly working as a kitchen helper. Nie said that after hiring P.P., Pacific Rim had him work first as a security guard and then as a carpenter and a mason on the project.

During P.P.'s employment with Pacific Rim, he received no training to perform carpentry or masonry work, Nie said. When the contract was terminated, P.P. was among those first batch of employees that Pacific Rim terminated.

In another example, Nie said, shortly after entering into the contract, Pacific Rim hired an employee with initials E.M. Prior to being hired by Pacific Rim, E.M. was a delivery man.

After hiring E.M., Nie said, Pacific Rim had him do carpentry work involved in installing glass reinforced concrete panels on the exterior of the hotel building of the project as a carpenter.

The lawyer said that during the time period when Pacific Rim performed work under

the contract, more than 200 GRC panels were installed at a much slower pace than what it would have been had Pacific Rim hired construction workers and supervisory staff that possessed ordinary skill, competency, and standing in the trades involved.

He said a substantial number, if not most, of the GRC panels installed during the term of the contract were installed incorrectly and had defects, such as improper welding, and the defects had to be corrected.

The lawyer said that after the contract was terminated, the incorrectly installed GRC panels had to be removed and re-installed.

Nie said prior to the filing of this lawsuit by Pacific Rim, IPI has made payments in aggregate over \$30 million to Pacific Rim.

He said even putting aside the damages caused by Pacific Rim to IPI, the payments that have been made by IPI to Pacific Rim prior to the filing of this lawsuit were more than enough to cover the fair value of the services and materials furnished by Pacific Rim, and more than enough to provide a significant profit margin to Pacific Rim.

Nie also noted that at least in the invoices for April, May, and June 2018, Pacific Rim listed multiple persons work-

ing as equipment mechanics, even though it employed during that period at most one qualified equipment mechanic with the initials M.V.

Pacific Rim is suing IPI for alleged non-payment of \$5.65 million in construction services.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona's recently granted summary judgment in favor of Pacific Rim and against IPI. Manglona found undisputed evidence that IPI defaulted on Nov. 15, 2018 when they failed to pay the full amount owed Pacific Rim.

Thompson said the total interest accrued as of April 16, 2020, is \$457,481, while the principal owed on the promissory note is \$6,383,462.

Thompson said the total due on the promissory note for interest and principal is \$6,840,944 as of April 16, 2020.

At a hearing last April 2, Manglona denied IPI's motion to dismiss Pacific Rim's lawsuit. She granted Pacific Rim's motion for summary judgment as to its claim for breach of promissory note.

The judge ordered Thompson to submit proposal with respect to fees and interest that IPI is liable to pay.

Manglona also stated that she will issue an order on Pacific Rim's lien application.

DPS: Employees should have ID during curfew hours

The CNMI Department of Public Safety has noticed a slight increase in vehicles driving through the roadways claiming that they are heading to or from work during curfew hours.

To better aid officers in on-the-spot verification, DPS is asking businesses who are operating during the curfew hours to have employees carry their work identification as

they are making their way between work and home. Businesses are asked to provide a point of contact that is reachable between the hours of 7pm and 6am to validate employees who are on the road due to work schedules.

DPS will continue to conduct mandatory traffic stops on vehicles on the island's roads during curfew hours.

DPS asks the public for their patience during this sensitive time. As part of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and in consultation with the public health advice from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., DPS will continue to join CNMI efforts in protecting the health and safety of the residents of the Marianas. (PR)

Update on scheduled water interruption

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. issued an update yesterday on the scheduled water service interruption for portions of As Perdido, As Lito and Koblerville areas that is scheduled for today, April 23, 2020, from 8:30am to 3:30pm.

CUC water operations and leak detection personnel discovered a leak on a 6-inch transmission line on Exploring Drive, Airport Road Dandan, limiting the volume to the water tank, therefore reducing the water pressure. However, another leak

on the 6-inch transmission line located at the Isley Field was detected yesterday morning. Due to the severity of this damaged line, CUC water personnel will be making the necessary repairs at the Isley Field instead. This damaged line has been affecting the Dandan water tank as water is lost prior to entering the tank. Repairs to the damaged transmission line on Exploring Drive, Airport Road Dandan will be made and announced on a later date.

CUC urges customers in the

affected areas to practice water conservation and to contact the CUC Customer Call Center to report other identified leaks for repairs.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

PH: Mandatory 14-day quarantine for returning OFWs

The Philippine Consulate General in Agaña, Guam, informed the public in an advisory Tuesday that all overseas Filipino workers returning to the Philippines—whether sea-based or land-based—will be required to undergo a 14-day facility quarantine upon arrival.

Foreign cruise ships car-

rying Filipino crew shall be allowed to dock in ports in Manila and to be used as quarantine facility for Filipino crewmembers. Foreign crew members onboard those foreign cruise ships shall be allowed to disembark in Manila for the sole purpose of taking outbound flights to their final destination abroad, provided

such foreign crew have already completed the 14-day mandatory quarantine period upon disembarkation.

The consular advisory, as released by the office of Philippine honorary consul to the CNMI Glicerio Arago, stated that the new guidelines are pursuant to Resolution 23, series of 2020, issued on

April 13, 2020, by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

All arrangements regarding

the mandatory 14-day facility quarantine will be facilitated and implemented by the Sub-Task Group for the Repatriation of OFWs un-

der the National Task Force-Task Group on Response Operations headed by the Department of Transportation. *(Saipan Tribune)*

CPA austerity remains in place

Although the Commonwealth Ports Authority received \$22.8 million as its share under the CARES Act Airport Grant, the CPA board has no intention at this time to lift austerity measures it earlier implemented after flights to the islands came to a grinding halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds announced during a special board meeting Monday that the board considers it prudent to remain on austerity levels at 64 hours.

King-Hinds said that, under the CARES Act funding, the \$22.8 million is basically to allow CPA to be self-sustainable and to be able to pay operation and maintenance costs, which includes personnel, utility, as



King-Hinds

well as the ability to keep the airport credit ratings stable.

"So this is good news for CPA definitely," she said, as she disclosed that that they have been getting phone calls as to how this CARES Act grant will impact personnel and the current austerity measures that are in place.

The \$22.8 million may seem like a sustainable amount, but King-Hinds pointed out that they don't know how long the COVID-19 pandemic will impact operations. "So what we want to do basically is sustain this operation, using those funds for as long as we possibly can," she said. "We will be continuously operating under such conditions and we ask everybody to bear with us as we face this challenge together."

King-Hinds said it's not like CPA is getting a huge chunk of money in the bank. She clarified that these CARES Act funds are held by the Federal Aviation Administration, that it is not deposited or transferred over to CPA. "What essentially happens is, we submit this request for reimbursement based on the funds that we've expended for operations and maintenance," she said.

She said this is a drawdown type of situation and the funds are there to be expended as CPA needs it.

The chairwoman said another portion of the CARES Act that benefits CPA is the waiver on the local matching for Airport Improvement Program projects. "So now all of these [AIP projects] are federally funded. And we hope to begin addressing, working on those projects," she said. *(Ferdie De La Torre)*

Subsistence allowance for Rota medical patients thumbed down

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has vetoed a local Senate bill that would provide financial aid to hemodialysis and terminally-ill patients on Rota, saying legal issues prevent him from enacting the measure.



Manglona

Senate Local Bill 21-2, S1, which aims to establish a Medical Subsistence Allowance Program for Rota, would provide an allowance to hemodialysis patients, and those who consider their medical condition as terminally-ill. They must be residents and registered voters of Rota, and for minors, at least one parent should be a Rota voter.

While expressing support for the Rota delegation's intention, Torres disapproved the bill due to legal issues that would arise from its enactment. This include its limitation to Rota registered voters, and the sharing of confidential medical information, which, according to the governor, is likely a violation of the federal statute Health Insurance Portability and Ac-

countability Act.

Sen. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), who introduced the bill, said that she will be working with the delegation counsel to address Torres' concerns and will re-introduce the legislation.

Santos also added that the bill being vetoed is "another reason or lesson for our local delegation to avoid rushing passing local bills without first thoroughly reviewing the bills, soliciting comments from stakeholders."

The senator revealed that the local bill was passed without any comments from the Rota Health Center or the Commonwealth Health Care Corp., and that the mayor of Rota was not provided the 30-days commenting period required by law.

"Instead, the mayor was asked to provide oral comment of a yes or no on the amended legislation just an hour prior to the session," Santos said. "When we hastily passed legislations for the sake of passing them, more than likely a veto will be the cor-

responding result."

Rota delegation chair Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), in an interview, said that the Rota Legislative Delegation had been providing medical financial assistance for many years to all hemodialysis and terminally ill patients on Rota.

"Senate Local Bill 21-2 was passed to create a medical review committee consisting of health professionals so that all decisions on qualifications and type of financial assistance can be made by the committee and not the Legislative Delegation," he added.

Manglona also said that he has asked the Senate legal counsel to review the governor's veto message, to look at issues that need to be addressed. *(Iva Maurin)*

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BOE to revisit decision on injunction

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Board of Education is set to revisit the decision to file an injunction against the CNMI government that would guarantee the Public School System an annual budget of not less than 25% of the Commonwealth's general revenue.

During an emergency board meeting yesterday, BOE chairwoman Janice Tenorio called for a regular board meeting next Wednesday to re-discuss the injunction that is set to be heard by the Superior Court in June.

According to Tenorio, a relationship with the CNMI government is crucial in light of the CNMI's current economic downturn as a result of COVID-19.

"We had a very good working relationship with the government. Put politics aside, that was our strength,"

she said.

Board member Marylou Ada was in support of revisiting the injunction, but only after a meeting is held with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the entire board to negotiate assistance to pay off PSS' missed payrolls.

"I know that the government is willing to sit and talk with us and times are critical and a lot of our employees are really suffering. If we can get an appointment with the governor to sit down and see how much and how fast he can provide us aid, we will start thinking of negotiations," she said.

Ada said if Torres is willing to sit down with the board, then the board should do it, if it means paying teachers and staff what they are owed.

"It's really hurting us and the injunction hearing is in June. ... If he is willing to sit down with us and talk to us, let's do it. We really need all the help we can get. We cannot wait an-

other day. We're missing over three payrolls and our employees really need it," Ada said.

Ada added that now is the time to negotiate with the governor because many people are suffering greatly.

"We can negotiate with him, let's start dialoguing. We cannot continue to act like this because people are suffering. I would say yes to meeting with the governor so we can get an amicable solution. We cannot delay this anymore. We need to get money out to our employees and teachers," she said.

Vice chair Herman Atalig added that the injunction has proven to be a major obstacle for PSS in resolving its financial issues.

"We are standing all alone. I humbly ask our colleagues to consider the injunction for the benefit of all our employees for the CNMI. We need to build a relationship and work together as one CNMI. Let us put our pride aside and work with our government," he said.

SOME

From Page 1

yet, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp announced plans to restart the state's economy before the end of the week. Kemp said gyms, hair salons, bowling alleys and tattoo parlors could reopen Friday, as long as owners followed strict social distancing and hygiene requirements.

Boeing said it was putting about 27,000 people back to work this week building passenger jets at its Seattle-

area plants, with virus-slowng precautions in place, including face masks and staggered shifts. Doosan Bobcat, a farm equipment maker and North Dakota's largest manufacturer, announced the return of about 2,200 workers at three factories around the state.

The reopenings came amid economic gloom, as oil futures plunged below zero on Monday and stocks and Treasury yields also dropped on Wall Street. The cost to have a barrel of U.S. crude delivered in May plummeted to negative \$37.63. It was at roughly \$60 at the start of the year.

Elsewhere around the world, step-by-step reopenings were underway in Europe, where the crisis has begun to ebb in places such as Italy, Spain and Germany. Parts of the continent are perhaps weeks ahead of the U.S. on the infection curve of the virus, which has killed about 170,000 people worldwide, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Businesses that start operating again in the U.S. are likely to engender good will with the Trump administration at a time when it is doling out billions in relief to companies.

MPLT

From Page 1

Andrew Orsini, and Phillip Mendiola-Long voted yes to approve the resolution.

The resolution authorizes Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada to apply for loan of up to \$5 million from the MPLT and assures MPLT that the loan will be paid off five business days after PSS receives, in its account, the over \$12.6 million from the CARES Act.

PSS legal counsel Tiberius Mocanu addressed some of Tenorio's concerns regarding the loan, like whether PSS is allowed to borrow money from MPLT and whether the loan is unlawful.

According to Mocanu, PSS is a

non-profit organization governed by an elected board and is a corporate entity that has the power to borrow money, as it has done in the past.

"It has the power to sue and to be sued, so it has the ability to borrow from MPLT," said Mocanu.

Whether the loan itself is permissible or if PSS meets the eligibility of the loan to be issued, Mocanu said he does not have an exact answer.

"There's a clear constitutional mandate that states that any instrument of the government is not permitted to borrow money of any kind to fund its operation and paying its people certainly meets the definition of operations. [However] there has been [instances] over time where MPLT has, in fact, funded operations for different government agen-

cies, most recently the \$50 million loaned to the government. An attorney general's opinion found that the devastation and the financial deficit caused by [Super Typhoon] Yutu was extraordinary and that allowed the government to borrow money to continue its operations," he said.

BOE member Marylou Ada encouraged her colleagues to pursue the MPLT loan as teachers are the ones suffering and continue to suffer if payments to payroll continue to be delayed.

"Let's also do [the] MPLT [loan] because we really need all the help we can get. We cannot wait another day. We're missing over three payrolls and our employees really need it. I would suggest that we go forth and do our best with MPLT. We're talking about education here," she said.

BILL

From Page 1

100% of the retirees' pensions, and that his proposal to introduce amendments is to recognize the "original commitment during the course of pre-Public Law 18-56."

Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) both stressed the need to put more teeth into the legislation, for the 25% of the retirees to "not be touched" other than for the pension payment.

Money for senatorial districts

According to Senate President Victor Hocog (R-Rota), both Rota and Tinian were offered \$1 million each—out of the \$15 million from the collected fee—during the course of negotiation at that time.

"If there was no \$2 million back then, then I doubt whether the Saipan exclusive casino will now be in existence," he added.

At that time, Hocog said, there was no mention that the \$2 million earmarked for Rota and Tinian, and the \$11 million for Saipan, will continue to serve the payment for the retirees' 25%.

"The deceased Gov. Inos then have asked the delegation from the respective municipalities if we are willing to...use the \$2 million supposedly earmarked for Rota and Tinian, and then each senatorial will address their retirees' benefit on the 25%," he said.

It was promised that, until such time that the casino is moving forward and when the revenue from the casino is realized, the \$2 million will be restored back for Rota and Tinian and the \$11 million for Saipan, he added.

"We have definitely realized a substantial amount of revenue from the casino generation of funds, thereby giving bonuses to our retirees, restoring back the \$2 million for our respective municipality, and the \$11 million for the third senatorial, [now allowing] the casino revenue to pay 100% of the retirees' pension. That includes the 25%, plus the payment for the Settlement Fund," Hocog said.

In support of the amendment

Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota) backed Hofschneider, saying such an amendment will provide a safety net for the continuity of locally-created and funded programs in the senatorial districts.

rial districts.

The senator stated that the bill, if it not be amended, would remove funding from the casino business gross revenue tax for each senatorial districts to fund locally created programs.

"For Rota, there will be no more appropriations for local employments, interisland medical referral patients and escorts stipends, patients' subsistence allowance, municipal scholarships, housing allowance for students pursuing higher education, and so forth," she said.

Santos, however, also stressed that the retirees' 25% is a pressing matter, adding that the retirees have worked and earned their pensions, and that its provision is constitutionally protected.

The senator, at the end of her statement, expressed hope that, as the CNMI recovers financially, the central government does not forget the money that it owes the senatorial districts.

"Our economic recovery may be gradual as this is a global concern but we should not lose hope. We should continue to work jointly and collectively as this...requires everyone's cooperation and attention," she added.

Assurance for the retirees

While he supports the assistance needed by the senatorial districts for local programs, Sen. Vinnie Sablan (Ind-Saipan) is all for the need of the retirees.

"I really feel for our retirees, especially those that are making very little money, not receiving their 25%, and for the family and children that they care for, their obligations. ...Not that the programs are less important, but the people and what they need to provide for their families is really a priority," he said. "My question is, will we receive the full \$15 million? What will PSS, through the injunction, ask for? How much will we be required to give them? And will we have enough for the 25% share from the local government? Will it be enough?"

Sablan wants assurance from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres that there will be money to cover for the retirees' pension come August, when the government is to receive money from the island's lone casino license holder, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI).

TWO

From Page 1

ever, still strongly advised to continue practicing social distancing, Muña said, as they could still have the virus in their system.

The bottom line, Muña said, is because an individual could potentially still have the virus in their body, this is why CHCC should do a community-wide testing to know what's in the community.

Muña also stated that the certificate doesn't mean that an individual who had been isolated may now walk freely in the community because they might think that they won't be getting the virus anymore. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rec-

ommends to continue wearing face masks to protect not only yourself, but everyone else in the community.

"The bottom line is, when people are recovered, they're released," said Muña. "You can't imprison them forever."

With more testing kits available in the CNMI, individuals who do go into isolation at the alternate care site at Kanoa Resort in Susupe and are released can later undergo retesting.

Janet (not her real name), who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, is hopeful that the people who are being released from isolation will still practice responsible behavior. "I'm not [going to] lie. I do worry that they will infect the community, but I hope that they do take this seriously and practice social distanc-

ing, good hygiene, or just stay quarantined in their home for two more weeks just to be safe," she said.

"I think what the governor and the COVID-19 Task Force are doing is great," added Jerry (not his real name). "Because the CNMI is way ahead of schedule with all the precautionary things that are being done, I'm confident that the CNMI will be able to beat the coronavirus."

If people don't take this seriously, the lockdowns, curfews, etc., will be in effect until the next few years, he said. "We all really have to be careful now," he added. "I don't want to live in a world where wearing masks every time we go out is the 'new normal.' I want to be able to go outside and not worry anymore."

To date, the CNMI has 14 con-

firmed COVID-19 positive cases, two deaths, 11 recoveries, and 51 negative cases.

The CNMI government is currently finalizing plans of implementing mass testing throughout the CNMI. It will be free for everyone.

More test kits to arrive

According to press secretary Kevin Bautista, there will be more test kits that will be arriving on Saipan through a charter flight late last night.

This comes after the 26 ventilators, medical supplies, and UV lights for infection control were shipped from Long Beach, California to the CNMI early this week. These medical supplies will help expand the CNMI's efforts against the spread of COVID-19 and the

capacity of CHCC's laboratory.

COVID-19 in Guam

As of late evening of April 21, the Department of Public Health and Social Services in Guam tested 42 individuals for COVID-19. Nobody tested positive and all 42 tested negative. This means that Guam has had the fortunate news of having no new cases for four days in a row now.

The DPHSS overall count includes probable cases of COVID-19 and confirmed positive cases tested by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, and Diagnostic Laboratory Services.

To date, Guam has 136 confirmed COVID-19 positive, with five deaths and 114 recoveries.

'Congress, White House reach accord on more paycheck protection funding'

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Negotiations are now complete on adding another \$310 billion to the Paycheck Protection Program created in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, "CARES," Act, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) yesterday.

The original \$350 billion for PPP was used up last week; 56 applicants in the Marianas were awarded loans worth \$12.6 million, but other Marianas applicants were turned away because funds were exhausted.

"Businesses and non-profit organizations that applied too late for the first round of funding should prepare now to apply for round two," Sablan said. "These are first-come, first-served monies; and we have already seen how strong the demand is. So, get ready."

The Paycheck Protection Program, run by the Small Business Administration, provides loans to allow businesses and non-profits with fewer than 500 employees to keep paying staff despite being shut down by the coronavirus. Some loan funds may also be used to cover rent, utilities, and other ongoing expenses. Loan recipients who keep staff on payroll for eight weeks and meet other conditions may have the loan converted to an outright grant.

Now that negotiations are complete, the Senate was expected to vote yesterday on approving the additional funding and at the House of Representatives today.

"Another important result of this week's negotiations," Sablan said, "is that \$60 billion is set aside for small lenders and community-based financial institutions, to serve the needs of unbanked and underserved small businesses and nonprofits—especially rural, minority, and women-owned businesses. That could improve the odds for Marianas businesses and non-profits."

In the first round of the Paycheck Protection Program 508 organizations in Guam were able to borrow \$102.4 million. In Hawaii 11,553 businesses and non-profits borrowed over \$2 billion.

More help

Although an initial bill drafted by Senate Republicans last week only included more PPP money and had no set-aside for rural areas, like the Marianas, Democrats insisted on the set-aside and that the new bill also include funding for hospitals, community health centers, and other healthcare providers at the frontline in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

In negotiations Democrats secured \$75 billion to help with coronavirus-related expenses, such as the costs of personal protective equipment, and to reimburse providers for lost revenue. \$100 billion was provided in last month's CARES Act for these purposes.

Democrats also secured \$25 billion for testing, which experts say is the key to reopening the economy. Democrats were able to get Trump administration negotiators to agree to a national strategic testing policy that will focus on increasing testing capacity, including testing supplies, nationwide.

"We only have to look at the example of Germany and South Korea, which did such a good job of widespread national testing, reduced the spread of the virus, and are now inching towards reopening the economy, to know how what America needs to do," Sablan said.

"This additional money and the administration's agreement to carry out a national testing policy will finally start America moving in the right direction."

Republicans block aid

Sablan did express disappointment that another Democratic goal—funding for local government operations—was rejected by the Republicans and the Trump administration.

"The White House's refusal to provide more relief to states and territories, like the Marianas, where revenues have plunged because of the coronavirus, will make it that much harder for local governments to meet their obligations and provide essential services," he said. "We have already seen the Commonwealth cut funding for retirees, stop paying teachers, and reduce government work-hours."

Sablan made direct aid to local government a top priority during negotiations on the CARES Act last month. The Marianas received \$34 million in direct aid.

Now that interim funding for the Paycheck Protection Program and health care is being addressed, he plans to keep pushing for more help for local government services in what many are calling CARES II legislation.

As vice chairman for Insular Affairs, Sablan led a letter from Pacific-area delegates to Congress two weeks ago that specifically targeted direct aid for education, water and sewer infrastructure spending, and full inclusion of the insular areas in federal health insurance programs, such as Medicaid, for CARES II. (PR)

AS COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES

Difficulties in processing time-sensitive mail piling up

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, federal agencies are finding it increasingly difficult—and may soon be impossible—to carry out their responsibilities for processing thousands of pieces of time-sensitive mail. Federal agencies also find it hard providing timely and direct written notices to thousands of potential claimants and making the necessary referrals to the U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country.

This was learned soon after U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted Monday the U.S. government's request for a blanket two-month extension on statutory deadlines for forfeiture activities.

The agencies that are facing difficulties are those with administrative forfeiture authority such as the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Secret Service, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation, and the U.S. Postal Service.

The U.S. government explained the federal agencies' situation in its request for the U.S. District Court for the NMI to issue an order granting a 60-day blanket extension of the statutory deadlines by which the U.S. government is required to do two things: to begin administrative forfeiture proceedings against seized property, and to begin civil judicial forfeiture ac-

tions following submission of administrative claims in such proceedings.

In granting the U.S. government's request, Manglona ordered that for all federal seizures of property that occurred or will occur in the NMI between Feb. 3, 2020, and April 30, 2020, the deadline for the seizing agency to commence administrative forfeiture proceedings against such property shall be extended for 60 days.

For all seizures of property by state or local law enforcement agencies in the NMI that occurred, or will occur, between Jan. 3, 2020, and April 30, 2020, the deadline for the agency to begin administrative forfeiture proceedings shall be extended for 60 days.

Manglona said the 90-day deadline for the filing of a civil forfeiture complaint (or inclusion of an asset in a criminal indictment) following an agency's receipt of an administrative claim between Feb. 3, 2020, and April 30, 2020, is extended to 150 days instead of the statutory 90 days.

To the extent that any agency executed a 30-day extension of any administrative notice deadline on or before March 31, 2020, the deadline for the sending of the required notice is extended for 60 days from the current deadline.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr implemented last March 15 a "maximum telework" policy to allow federal employees to engage in social distancing to slow the spread of the coronavirus. That policy covers all Department of Justice law enforce-

ment components. The departments of Homeland Security and Treasury issued similar orders. As a result, virtually all asset forfeiture personnel working in the headquarters facilities of the agencies in and around Washington, D.C. are teleworking, as are the overwhelming majority of the attorneys and staff at the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Districts of Guam and NMI.

Th affected agencies initiate and process tens of thousands of administrative forfeitures



Manglona

every year, Manglona said, and those efforts generate massive amounts of paperwork, and require regular, close physical interaction among office personnel in each agency's headquarters

office to prepare notice letters, correction letters, denial letters, the mailing envelopes for all of those letters, and the preparation of notice by publication for each targeted asset on the government's dedicated forfeiture website.

In addition, she said, agency employees and contractors physically handle large volumes of mail from the public daily, including handwritten letters, claims, petitions for remission or mitigation, and requests for reconsideration. Although the seizing agencies are capable of processing claims and petitions submitted electronically, the overwhelming majority of all submissions (approximately 85%) still go through the mail.

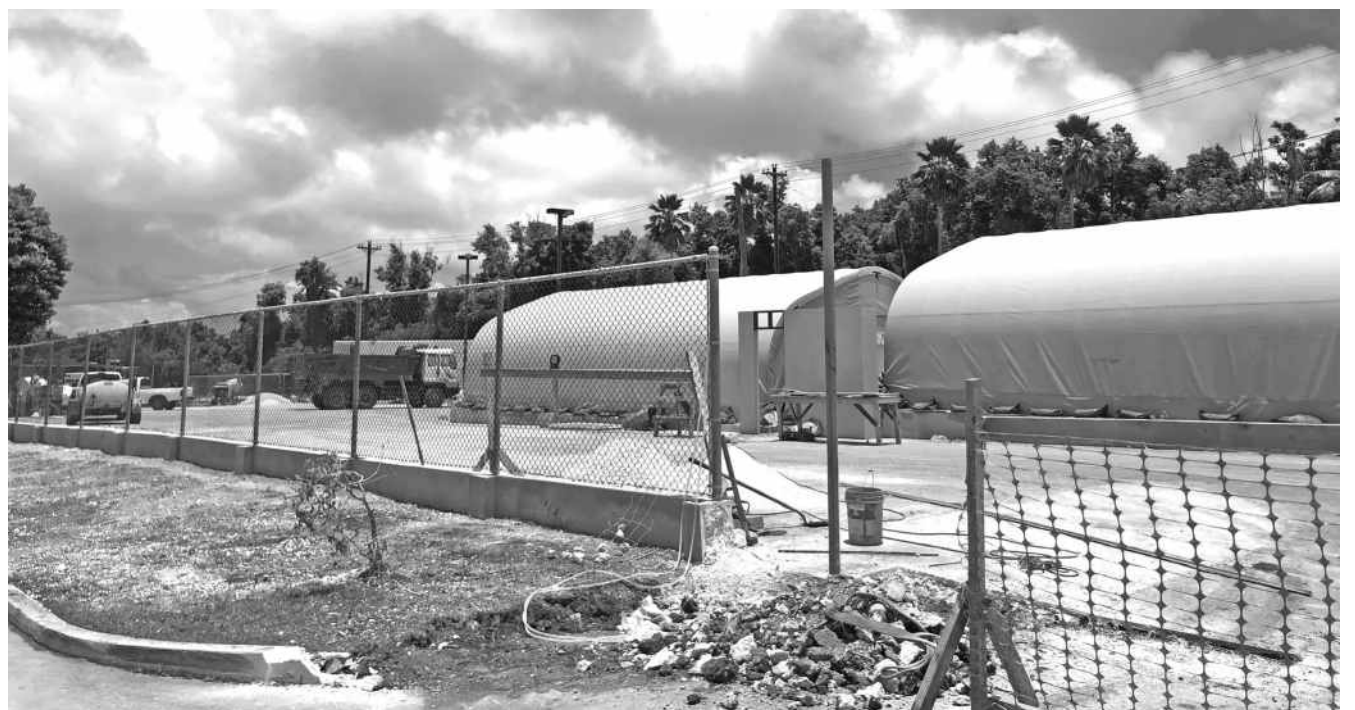
The submission of timely administrative claims requires the agencies to refer those matters to the U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country, and

trigger separate deadlines relating to the filing of judicial forfeiture actions in the district courts.

Manglona found that the working conditions described in the U.S. government's application are inconsistent with the social distancing guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health and public safety officials, the U.S. government owns guidelines for workplace safety, and the explicit requirements of mandatory declarations and executive orders of the NMI government.

Manglona said the agencies have certified to the court that, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, their compliance with the 60 and 90-day statutory deadlines for starting administrative forfeiture with respect to federal and adoptive seizures, respectively, is likely to endanger the life or physical safety of government employees and contractors responsible for carrying out the duties of the agency administrative forfeiture programs, justifying the extension of these deadlines.

The judge said the U.S. government has demonstrated that the ongoing national emergency triggered by the pandemic, and the resulting need for social distancing and heightened controls on physical contact with objects that may present a risk of contamination, constitute good cause for a finding that requiring the noticing of seizures and referral of claims may endanger the life or health of the government asset forfeiture attorneys and staff responsible for reviewing cases, issuing notices, and processing submitted claims and petitions.



FIELD HOSPITAL

With the installation of gates surrounding the area, construction work is nearly done on the field hospital that is being built at the upper parking lot of the Commonwealth Health Center. The temporary hospital is now called the Medical Care and Treatment Site.

KRIZEL TUAZON

'Proposed MPLT loan gives PSS employees false hope'

The two Board of Education members who opposed a resolution to authorize the Public School System to borrow more than \$3 million from the Marianas Public Land Trust explained that the proposed loan would actually violate the law.

In a joint statement Tuesday night, the two BOE members—chair Janice Marie A. Tenorio and vice chair Herman Atalig—explained that the loan's intent is laudable but is a futile move as the law does not support PSS borrowing.

The BOE meeting took place April 21, 2020, via a conference call. On the agenda was the proposed borrowing of \$3.4 million from the Commonwealth Development Authority-Marianas Public Lands Trust. CDA must first approve the PSS borrowing in order for MPLT board of trustees to entertain the loan proposal.

The planned borrowing will be shepherded through a BOE resolution. The purpose of the proposed resolution was for PSS to enter into a "bridge loan" or a short-term loan, primarily to "be used to pay for PSS" outstanding local obligations..."

The outstanding local obligation will be used to pay for the salaries of PSS personnel.

The joint statement says: "We recognize the intent of the proposed borrowing. It is very laudable. We are one with everyone especially during this very trying times, and that we have to find means to ensure that we are able to pay our hardworking PSS personnel what is due of them," the statements said. "But in doing so, we also have to be cognizant that in funding for PSS operation/salaries, it must also be based on the actual/current realities.

"Currently, our central government has no means to fund all services and operations, and has to shut down and furlough operations and employees; government services and operations are limited only to those that are in the health care and frontline sectors fighting the spread of COVID-19 in the CNMI.

Why we voted against the borrowing

"We respectfully and earnestly

appeal for everyone's understanding and hear us both why we voted 'no': In the law that created CDA (Title 4: Economic Resources, Division 10: Commonwealth Development Authority) under § 10203. Powers and Restrictions, Section (3), CDA is: 'To receive and hold funds from the United States government, the government of the Commonwealth, the Marianas Public Land Trust, the Economic Development Loan Fund and any other sources;'"

"The proposed CDA-MPLT borrowing is against the law.

"We are governed by laws which were promulgated and enacted as safeguards and protect the function(s) of government departments/instrumentalities/agencies including corporations and boards' functions. These statutes were explicitly put in place to ensure that every government entity is able to perform and deliver respective fiduciary duties.

"To further explain, allow us to quote CDA's mission which is 'to provide appropriate financial and technical assistance to facilitate the start-up or expansion of private and public enterprise for their success, the benefit of the Commonwealth's economic welfare and the long-term sustainability of the CDA.'

"CDA has a very specific and explicit mandate in the disposition and utilization of government funds. This is further explained under **Division 10, § 10203. Powers and Restrictions** through the following sections:

(7) *To make and issue bonds, notes or other obligations in furtherance of the purposes of this division including, but not limited to, funding capital improvement projects of the Commonwealth for sewers, power, water, roads, health facilities, air and sea ports, and parks and recreation facilities;*

(8) *To make loans to any autonomous public agency for use in any project that in the judgement of the authority will further the purposes of this division;*

(9) *To guarantee the obligations of the Commonwealth or its autonomous public agencies, incurred to fund any proj-*

ect that in the judgement of the authority to be consistent with this division;

(14) *To make loans to private individuals, corporations and cooperatives who are eligible for loans under the special provisions reserving funds for farmers, fishermen, agricultural and marine cooperatives under Covenant § 702(c), and allocate to the Marianas Islands Housing Authority those funds reserved for a special program of low interest housing loans for low income families;*

"Further, CDA has a very restrictive mandate and authority in disposition of public funds. The same law that created CDA, in particular § 10203. Powers and Restrictions, the authority (CDA):

(35)* (b) *The authority shall not:*

(2) *Fund or loan funds for government operations, except for its own operations as provided in this division;*

(3) *Make, issue, guarantee or otherwise participate in providing credit or lending money for consumer loans; and*

MPLT position

"Additionally, earlier last April 21, the MPLT chairman, Martin B. Ada, has communicated to Tenorio, explaining MPLT's positions/actions on four questions pertaining to PSS' need for funding assistance. These are the questions:

1) Is PSS allowed to borrow money from MPLT?

2) What is the money going to be used for?

3) Is there a guaranteed debt servicing of the loan?

4) Can the federal stimulus package, of which \$10 million is expected to be earmarked for the PSS, be pledged as guaranteed repayment of the loan from MPLT?

"These questions were based on the two letters sent by Commissioner of Education Dr. Alfred B. Ada and Tenorio on March 26, 2020, and April 2, 2020, respectively, to Ada

"Ada told Tenorio yesterday that on April 16, 2020, the MPLT board of trustees met, to address the two letters, and essentially issued this position:

"By CNMI law the PSS

board needs to pass a resolution indicating their intention to loan from either CDA, MPLT or both. Two, the loan from CDA or MPLT cannot be used for operations (salaries). Three, there has to be a guaranteed form of repayment of the \$5 million loan to MPLT. And four, we are skeptical that the federal award letter can be pledged as a form of repayment to MPLT. We all know that there are terms and conditions that must be followed by the recipient of any form of federal aid or grants. Three out of four MPLT trustees pointed out their concerns of borrowing for operations, which includes salaries for employees."

"Ada added, 'But even with all these, our door is still open for further discussions if the PSS board can come up with a workable proposal for their present financial situation.'

Continue working with the governor

"Sadly but truthfully, using the CDA-MPLT borrowing route is a futile move. As we've mentioned earlier, while the intent is laudable, it essentially gives our hardworking PSS personnel false hopes, given that the law does not support PSS borrowing.

"We have to admit it. The filing of the injunction against the central government (governor, secretary of Finance) has effectively prevented us from using the only viable and workable way for us to navigate the current difficult situation PSS is facing: collaboration.

"The injunction has created further roadblocks for obtaining any additional funding from the central government. At this point in time, it is clearly evident where we stand: This is because of our own doing.

"We are standing alone from our partners in government. We have no way to reach out for help and support.

"However, even with the injunction filed by the BOE, we [Tenorio and Atalig] have been working with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, and Finance Secretary David DLG. Atalig to continue the biweekly transfer of government funds. This is to ensure that our hardwork-

ing PSS personnel will be paid even in the midst of this economic difficulties and this public health emergency.

"On many occasions, Gov. Torres, Lt. Gov. Palacios, and Finance Secretary Atalig have opened their doors to us, BOE members and PSS leaders, to dialogue and work together in finding ways to mitigate the

problem that PSS is facing. Gov. Torres, Lt. Gov. Palacios, and Finance Secretary Atalig have made it possible for us on many occasions.

"Let us work together in partnership. We are facing an extraordinary challenge and the only way for us—all of us—is to support each other as one commonwealth." (PR)

APAFS renews sponsorship of GIPS

HAGATNA, Guam—The Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies and CFA Institute jointly announced yesterday that CFA Institute has approved the APAFS as an official sponsor of the Global Investment Performance Standards, or GIPS® standards, for the Micronesia region.

The GIPS standards are recognized with high compliance levels among key financial centers in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Asia, Africa, and the Far East.

Although the activities of the GIPS standards are funded and administered by CFA Institute, their success is the result of an alliance of sponsors with experts from a variety of fields within the global investment industry. These key industry groups have been involved in and contributed significantly to promoting and developing the GIPS standards. The APAFS was the 27th group to join this alliance in 2006.

"We are very proud to be once again selected to continue the important role of promoting the GIPS standards in Micronesia. In continuing as a sponsor, we will jointly cooperate with CFA Institute in setting best practices in investment performance," said APAFS executive director Daniel A. Roland, CIMA®, AIFA®.

As a GIPS standards sponsor, APAFS will continue to "ensure that the foregoing standards will be applicable to Micronesia and that investment performance calculation and presentation can be compared from one place to another," Roland added.

"We are pleased to renew our partnership with the APAFS as the endorsed GIPS Standards Sponsor in Micronesia," said Karyn D. Vincent, senior head, Global Industry Standards, CFA Institute, "and look forward to working together with APAFS and its institutional fund membership over the coming years.

"APAFS's leadership provides a model for other institutional fund sponsor associations and I applaud the commitment of APAFS to actively promote fiduciary best practices such as the GIPS standards," she added.

Based on the principles of fair representation and full disclosure, the GIPS standards provide an ethical framework for the calculation and presentation of investment performance for investment management firms. The GIPS standards benefit both the investment management firms and their current and potential investing clients. Global standardization of investment performance reporting gives investors around the world the additional transparency they need to compare investment managers and will allow managers to compete for new business in foreign markets.

"From the plan sponsors' perspective, the major benefit of the GIPS standards is to advocate high quality and a unified approach in performance presentation practice and hence, provides users with a greater degree of confidence in the performance data being presented by prospective service providers," said Gerard Cruz, trustee, Government of Guam Employees Retirement Fund, and chairman of the APAFS board of governors.

About APAFS

APAFS is a non-profit educational and charitable association founded in 2000 for and by, representatives from public and private institutional funds from around the Asia Pacific region. The goal of APAFS is to raise the level of understanding and standards of practice among fiduciaries in the region, so that they might provide the most prudent stewardship of the funds entrusted to their care. More information can be found at www.apafs.org.

About CFA Institute

CFA Institute is the global association of investment professionals. Our aim is to create an environment where investors' interests come first, markets function at their best, and economies grow. There are more than 170,000 CFA charterholders worldwide in 162 markets. CFA Institute has nine offices worldwide and there are 158 local member societies. For more information, visit www.cfainstitute.org. (PR)

Interior redirects \$1.6M to repair A. Samoa ferry

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior has redirected \$1,640,000 in Capital Improvement Project funds to the American Samoa government to make emergency repairs to the M.V. *Manu'atele* ferry. The ferry, one of the main transports for passengers and cargo between the capital island of Tutuila and the Manua Islands, was

damaged during recent storms while at the dock in Ofu and is no longer in service.

"[Interior Secretary David Bernhardt] and I are happy to support the governor's request to redirect CIP funds to make emergency repairs to the *Manu'atele* ferry," said Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "Families in the ter-

ritory rely heavily on this ferry for the transport of goods as well as transportation for work and school. We support the return of this service as quickly as possible. We are also discussing potential options to support necessary repairs to the Ofu Dock, which also suffered damage during recent storms."

The Department of Port Administration in American Sa-

moa will be coordinating the necessary repairs to the ferry, which will be conducted in Hawaii and are estimated to be completed by this summer. In the meantime, the American Samoa government is exploring other options to serve the Manua Islands.

For more information about the work of the Office of Insular Affairs, visit <http://www.doi.gov/oia> or follow @ASIADomenech on Twitter. (PR)

McDonald's serves free 'Thank You Meal' to first responders

By BEA CABRERA

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CORRESPONDENT

There are a million ways to say thank you and McDonald's Saipan started doing it in its own way yesterday by serving free "Thank You Meals" to almost 700 COVID-19 front-liners composed of first responders and health care workers.

According to McDonald's owner and operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu, this is their way of showing appreciation to the CNMI's health care workers, Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and the COVID-19 Task Force.

"Today, we begin to thank the men and women of these agencies for their commitment, continued dedication and sacrifices for the whole CNMI community. I know that they have been working really hard for the CNMI's health and safety to fight the spread of the virus and we continue to pray for them," She said.

Ayuyu also thanked the Torres administration for ensuring that sufficient medical equipment and supplies reach the islands. "The administration has been active and working hard to bring in what we need... and we hope through the 'Thank You Meals' they will know we support them," she added.

This initiative is a national campaign of McDonald's worldwide and the management of McDonald's Saipan and Guam made sure that this will be executed on the islands as well. "My bosses were not hesitant to do it and said, 'Let's us find a way.'"



This is the first time we have had a national campaign like this and we are very happy to bring it to Saipan and Guam," said Mable Glenn, McDonald's executive assistant to the president.

She acknowledged that many personally have friends who are first responders. "We are humbled and inspired by the work our first responders do," she said, adding that the "Thank You Meal" program is a great way to "give back this way and show our appreciation."

The campaign will run for two weeks from April 22 to May 5 and every first responder is entitled to one free Thank You Meal (either breakfast, lunch, or dinner). "They can do take-out or drive thru to ask for their Thank You Meal. Select the meal options and



A Commonwealth Health Center nurse avails of her "Thank You Meal" at the Thank You Meal launch yesterday at McDonald's Middle Road.

present their badge or identification card."

Breakfast choices include the McDonald's breakfast sandwiches, hash browns and

a drink. Lunch and dinner options include double cheeseburger, 6-piece chicken nuggets, or Filet-O-Fish with fries and a drink.

The same campaign was also launched in Guam yesterday, led by Jose C. "Joe" Ayuyu, president and owner of McDonald's Guam

CPA board allows online meetings

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority board of directors amended during Monday's special meeting its bylaws so board members can meet via teleconference as long as they are in the CNMI.

After the directors' discussions, board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said the proposed new language in their bylaws should read that members of the board may participate in any meeting of the board within the CNMI by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment by which all persons participating

can hear each other.

All six directors—King-Hinds, Roman Tudela, Pete P. Reyes, Thomas P. Villagomez, Joseph Diaz, and Ramon Tebuteb—agreed with the new language. Barrie C. Toves was excused as he was on Rota.

King-Hinds presided over the emergency meeting held at 6pm between the arrival and departure terminals of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

It was Toves, who chairs the board's Airport Facilities Committee, that requested during their last board meeting to amend their bylaws so board members can meet via teleconference.

When asked yesterday for comments about the board's approval of the amendment, Toves, who is a Rota resident, expressed appreciation to his colleagues for taking action on the amendment, which would now allow his participation in board meetings via teleconference, videocalls, etc.

Toves did not participate in the voting process but was able to listen and watch the meeting via Facebook live streaming. "The adopted amendment will allow me to participate on record in the next board meeting as long as I am within the CNMI," he said.

Before the amendment, CPA's bylaws require board

Gov. Ralph Torres, first lady Dianne Torres and McDonald's Saipan owner/operator Marcia "Ruri" Ayuyu pose with some CNMI COVID-19 first responders at the Thank You Meal launch yesterday at McDonald's Middle Road.

and Saipan. In a press release, he said they are inspired by the work that front-liners do each and every day. "At McDonald's, we're more than happy to participate in such a wonderful campaign to express our gratitude to all front-liners throughout Guam and Saipan," he added.

Gov. Ralph Torres, who was present at the Thank You Meal launch at McDonald's on Middle Road, said, said this is one of the many ways that the CNMI's private partners have been helping one way or another. Besides McDonald's, among those that have also reached out to the government to help are Kanoa Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Kensington Saipan, a sanitation company, the Joten family and "many others who have privately made contributions."

"We appreciate this kind gesture from the Ayuyu family," he added. "We are here to show our appreciation and welcome our private partners that help and support our first responders...especially at a time like this."

The Thank You Meal launch was also attended by Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Commonwealth Healthcare CEO Esther Muña; Warren Villagomez, director of Public Health and Hospital Emergency Preparedness Program; Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert A. Guerrero, and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesman Derek Gersonde, who was accompanied by some DFEMS staff.

NMC's summer semester will be online

Northern Marianas College is inviting new and current students to enroll in its summer session so they can earn additional credits and earn their degree sooner. The summer semester, which will be offered through virtual and online classes, includes business, education, math, nursing, and science courses.

Those who have not applied for admission can still do so by visiting the college's website at www.marianas.edu. The deadline to submit admission applications for the summer 2020 semester is on June 27, 2020. Note the other summer session dates below:

■ Ongoing until June 27, 2020: Academic Advising & Registration Period (for new and ongoing students)

■ June 27, 2020: Summer 2020 Admission Application Deadline

■ June 22, 2020: First

Day of Classes

Students who were enrolled during the fall 2019/spring 2020 semester are considered ongoing students, so there is no need to re-apply for admissions. Federal financial aid is also available for the summer semester. Those who have already submitted a 2019-2020 FAFSA application do not need to reapply or re-submit a FAFSA application for the summer semester.

New students will need to submit a 2019-2020 FAFSA by June 5, 2020. NMC's school code is 015746. To verify eligibility for Pell grants, applicants can contact the NMC Financial Aid Office through email at fao@marianas.edu.

For more information, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at oar@marianas.edu, or visit marianas.edu. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

In this pandemic, it's 'Live free—and die'

The small groups of people who have gathered, and continue to gather, to protest coronavirus restrictions in this state and many others are right about one big thing: The damage being done by the stay-at-home orders is enormous.

Millions of Americans have lost their jobs after most states ordered nonessential businesses to close until further notice. And many of those companies will probably never reopen. People teetering on the brink of poverty are being pushed over the edge.

The lockdowns have been particularly difficult for people with mental health issues and for families roiled by domestic violence. Schoolchildren are losing invaluable learning time, and if the closures continue for much longer, the kids most in need of help may end up at a permanent disadvantage. And there's reason to believe that people are dying of illnesses and injuries other than COVID-19 because treatments are being delayed or people are afraid to seek care in a hospital.

Things are worse than most of us have ever seen. On that we can all agree. But does the pain and suffering justify the immediate lifting of restrictions as the "Operation Gridlock" protesters demand?

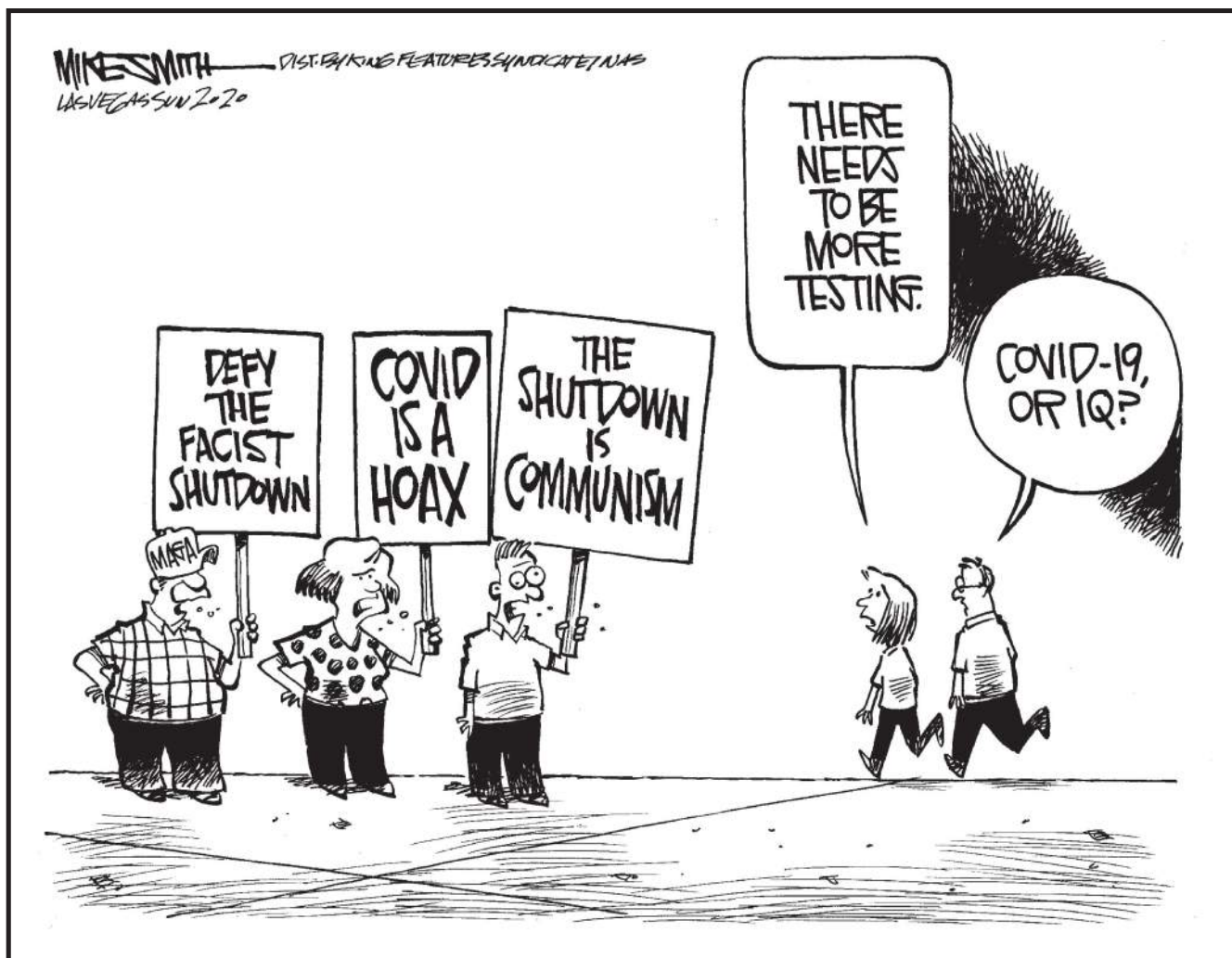
Absolutely not. There's too much at stake.

One sign spotted in Huntington Beach, Calif., on Friday during a gathering of 100 or so protesters summed it up pretty well: "Live free or die." The signmaker might have invoked the slogan, which happens to be the unironic state motto of New Hampshire (a state currently on lockdown), as a statement of principle. But in this pandemic a more apt slogan might be "Live free and die."

At the core of the protests is the argument that the treatment is worse than the disease itself. We respectfully disagree. We have lost some civil liberties and many jobs in recent weeks, but that is a temporary, if painful, condition. We will start to get our freedoms back once the restrictions are lifted, and though may take months or even years, the economy will recover. The roughly 42,000 Americans who have lost their lives to COVID-19 so far, however, are permanently dead. And a significant number of the more than 780,000 Americans who have confirmed cases of COVID-19 may suffer from lifelong complications such as diminished lung function and heart damage.

There's also the curious notion that the relatively low rate of cases in some places proves the stay-at-home restrictions aren't necessary. It's not happenstance that California has suffered fewer cases and deaths than other states, notably New York. California was the first U.S. state to adopt strict statewide social distancing measures. There's good reason to believe that this foresight has "flattened the curve" in California and avoided thousands of infections. Other states have also seen their rates of infection drop far below pro-

See PANDEMIC on Next Page



Can Trump ban all immigration? The Supreme Court will decide

It's not an exaggeration to say that the total ban on immigration that President Donald Trump announced by tweet is among the most extreme acts of unilateral executive authority attempted by any president since World War II. It will generate immediate legal challenges, and the ensuing litigation will reach the Supreme Court sooner rather than later.

"In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens," Trump tweeted at 10pm Monday night, "I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!"

An actual order hasn't yet been issued yet, and without one, it's tough to predict what the legal result of any challenges to it will be. But the court's Trump v. Hawaii decision upholding the president's Muslim ban provides some guidance.

Federal law authorizes the president to "suspend the entry of all aliens" into the United States whenever he "finds" that their entry "would be detrimental to the interests of the United States."

To suspend all immigration now, the Trump administration will have to explain why allowing any immigrant into the country would be detrimental to U.S. interests. In practice, that means the government will have to provide a reason for the ban that is based on facts, not mere presidential fiat expressed in under 240 characters.

But under the Trump v. Hawaii precedent, the court may not look very closely at those reasons. In that case, the Supreme Court first said that the law "exudes deference" to the president. Then it went on to reject the idea of a "searching inquiry" into whether the Trump administration's justifications were valid.

That said, challengers to the new ban would have some strong arguments about why its absolute nature goes too far. To the extent the order is about protection against COVID-19, as Trump's tweet suggested ("the Invisible Enemy"), it would seem irrational to bar immigrants who have been tested and found not to have the virus, or who have been previously exposed to the virus and may now be immune.

To the extent the order is about protecting U.S. jobs, as the tweet also suggested, it would seem illogical to bar immigrants who don't hold work visas, or immigrants who have work visas based on the premise that no U.S. person is available to take the job.

Where the rubber will meet the road is where Chief Justice

By **NOAH FELDMAN**
Bloomberg News

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and host of the podcast *Deep Background*. He is a professor of law at Harvard University and was a clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Souter. His books include *The Three Lives of James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President*.



John Roberts, sure to be the swing vote, has to consider how seriously to take these sorts of objections.

On the one hand, it will be obvious that Trump has issued the ban to try to get himself reelected. This immigration ban will function as a bookend to Trump's first term, when the Muslim ban fulfilled a campaign promise that helped him get elected in 2016. This new ban is similarly intended to distract attention from his mishandling of the pandemic and move the conversation back to a topic he thinks favors him. The blatant political motive undercuts the validity of Trump's stated reasons.

On the other hand, in the Trump v. Hawaii case, it was Roberts himself who created the precedent of strong deference. Having refused to allow Trump's Islamophobic motives to invalidate the Muslim ban, Roberts may be disinclined to block the president's actions in a situation where there is an actual emergency like a pandemic—and where there is no explicit constitutional provision prohibiting xenophobia.

To make matters more complicated, the Trump administration is likely to create exceptions when it formulates this ban. It seems almost certain that lawful permanent residents—green card holders—will be able to come and go. A ban would also likely exempt many other valid visa holders; the disruption of denying the entry could just be too great.

Then there will be the question of timing. Roberts will really hate making a major decision of this kind with a presidential election looming. He'd like to reduce the perception that the court's decisions have a partisan character.

Yet the court will presumably have no choice but to rule be-

See TRUMP on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Quarantine protesters are no heroes of civil disobedience

Our culture has a wonderful way of taking controversial or partisan figures and weaving them into the broader story of America.

When Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, for example, his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, purportedly said, “Now he belongs to the ages,” which was a way of saying that the battles Lincoln fought and the leadership he provided would stay with us and shape the nation going forward.

This kind of recognition is common when it comes to dead presidents, but it’s even more valuable when it comes to moral heroes. It’s appropriate that Republicans and Democrats alike celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. It’s a great and glorious thing that civil rights activist Rosa Parks is talked about as an American hero, not solely as an African American one.

That said, can we not be idiots about it?

“I call these people the modern-day Rosa Parks,” Stephen Moore an economic adviser to President Donald Trump, said several times last week, referring to the small crowds protesting government lockdown and quarantine orders. “They are protesting against injustice and a loss of liberties.”

Many have noted the bizarreness of a presidential adviser and avid Trump supporter—a man who sits on the president’s movable feast of a committee to reopen the economy—also serving as an organizer of protests against policies Trump himself has advocated.

But that contradiction merely reflects the president’s own inconsistent behavior. Trump acknowledges that masks are a good idea for all but then says he won’t wear one. He insists his power is absolute but then says governors are the ones who should “call the shots.” He issues guidelines for combating the pandemic but then lends support to protesters denouncing them and decrying the governors who are enforcing them “LIBERATE MICHIGAN!”

“LIBERATE MINNESOTA!” “LIBERATE VIRGINIA!” the president has tweeted.

Apparently, the hunger for the sweet air of liberty is most desperately felt in swing states.

It’s notable that Trump has not actually abandoned his view that he has “total authority” to call the shots; he merely chooses not to exercise the untrammelled power the Constitution does not give him. (The calculation seems to be that the president can pocket the successes of state-led efforts while casting blame elsewhere for any resulting problems.)

If Trump actually believed these states were in need of liberation, he could do something about it. Places in need of liberation suffer from tyranny, and the president has a constitutional obligation to ensure that American citizens do not endure tyranny.

It was this obligation that justified President Dwight Eisenhower’s decision to dispatch the National Guard to safeguard the lives of African Americans trying to go to school in Arkansas. It was why the Justice Department under Lyndon Johnson intervened to protect the civil liberties of African American citizens.

Which brings me back to Rosa Parks. The Jim Crow system she famously defied codified the notion that some Americans were fundamentally inferior to other Americans. The notion that some citizens don’t share the same constitutional rights as others is by definition tyrannical.

Nothing like that is happening here. I’m perfectly willing to concede that some governors have made mistakes. Banning Michiganders from purchasing gardening equipment and car seats for babies strikes me as heavy-handed.

But this Rosa Parks comparison is grotesque in its asininity. Unlike the quarantine protesters, Parks wasn’t fighting to regain temporarily suspended liberties, but liberties many Americans

By **JONAH GOLDBERG**

Tribune News Service

*Jonah Goldberg's latest book, *Suicide of the West*, is now available wherever books are sold. You can write to him in care of this newspaper or by e-mail at goldbergcolumn@gmail.com, or via Twitter @JonahNRO.*



cans had never fully enjoyed. She was a nonviolent warrior in a struggle to guarantee the rights and dignity of all Americans. Her struggle was grounded in the idea that all Americans are born with the equal right to life and liberty.

The quarantines are grounded in a not altogether dissimilar understanding: that we all deserve protection from a virus that disproportionately strikes our most vulnerable citizens and is now the second-leading cause of death in America, quickly closing in on heart disease. And because of the nature of the crisis, it requires cooperation and sacrifices from everybody.

As a matter of law and morality, these intentions matter. If you could ask the Founding Fathers whether what we’re going through is tyranny, they would answer, collectively, “Are you high?” or whatever the colonial-era equivalent was.

But we live in a time where inconveniences and hardships must be turned into acts of deliberate villainy by our political opponents or nefarious overlords. It takes a remarkable amount of cynicism to simultaneously impose hardships on American citizens and claim to be outraged by them. While we can marvel at that cynicism, we shouldn’t lose sight of the asininity—and villainy—also on display.

Let’s take care of direct care workers

Like so many other people, I’ve had my life shaken up by COVID-19. It’s been an adjustment, but one I am glad to make.

In recent weeks, I have been working up to seven days a week, by choice, as a direct care worker. This includes FaceTime sessions with some families and in-person visits with others. I work for an international nonprofit group with operations in Madison, Wis., and have private arrangements with other clients.

I love the work I do and the people I serve—in my case, children with autism spectrum disorders and their guardians. I know the same is true for other direct care workers, who numbered more than 2 million nationally in a 2018 count. They work with people who are elderly, living with disabilities or have chronic conditions.

The urgency of the moment has magnified the importance of this work. For many families across America, the outbreak of COVID-19 has created a heightened level of disruption and stress. Direct care workers have become a lifeline.

One parent told me that the only time she’s able to sleep is when I’m with her daughter. Sometimes, she also uses this time to do work remotely.

Her daughter loves going outdoors and visiting new places,

which helps her release energy and manage her temper. The decrease in these activities caused by the pandemic as well as changes to her schedule has made her extremely volatile, prone to somewhat violent outbursts and profanity. Given her age and height, it’s not a problem that can be ignored.

Another parent recently pulled me aside and murmured, “You have no idea how helpful it is to us that you’re here right now.”

His son is nonverbal, and I interpret his needs through various cues and my knowledge of his daily schedule. He needs a plethora of medications and very specific foods; behaviors as innocuous as a phone ringing can upset him for long periods of time.

Every parent I work for is trying to provide the best care they can for their child during these times, and it’s my job to help. But the COVID-19 pandemic is making a difficult situation even more challenging.

Families who once sent their children with developmental disabilities to schools or special education programs no longer can. As parents and children alike do their part to slow down transmission rates, many of them are struggling.

There needs to be a greater measure of public support for families who have additional needs during times of crisis. I know the families I work with; they will stop at nothing to get proper care for their children, and sacrifice everything they can to make

By **NUHA DOLBY**

Tribune News Service

Nuha Dolby, editorial intern at The Progressive magazine and a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, works as a direct care worker both privately and through public organizations.



that happen. But eventually it boils down to hours in a day, and bills to pay.

We need to significantly hike the poverty-level wages that most direct care providers are paid, which would help to reduce the industry’s high turnover rate, keeping experienced workers on board. We must also do more to create a system where families aren’t left behind during times of crisis, where guardians have access to direct care workers and financial support should they have to take time off themselves to provide care during times of need.

For now though, I will work tomorrow, and every day after that, until my families tell me they have it covered.

TRUMP

From Page 8

fore the 2020 election. The issue will be too pressing; different courts of appeals are likely to take different positions; and avoiding a decision before the 2020 election could look like an endorsement of Trump’s order.

The upshot is that we’re going to be talking about this ban a great deal for the next several months.

Democrats will no doubt find this reality politically frustrating. Trump no doubt wants to change the subject away from his pandemic response; the press (including commentators like me) will now appear to be acquiescing in Trump’s maneuver.

Unfortunately for the Democrats, however, there is no principled reason to ignore a radical ban like the one Trump is introducing. Its legality is doubtful. It’s a naked ploy to help Trump win the 2020 election. It will and should be challenged in court.

PANDEMIC

From Page 8

jected levels since their shelter-in-place edicts went into effect.

Lifting the restrictions too early could undo all the pain the state has suffered so far and prolong the shutdown misery. For that matter, so could too many more of the sorts of protests we’ve been seeing. If coronaviruses could dream, no doubt they would have fantasies about encountering large numbers of unprotected people from far-flung places congregating in close conditions, spraying respiratory droplets with every shout, and finding an easy ride to new places and people to infect.






It’s worth noting that although the protests have gotten a lot of media attention, they are relatively small and don’t represent the attitudes of most Americans. A joint poll by NBC News and the Wall Street Journal found that more people fear lifting the restrictions too soon. Furthermore, the demonstrations

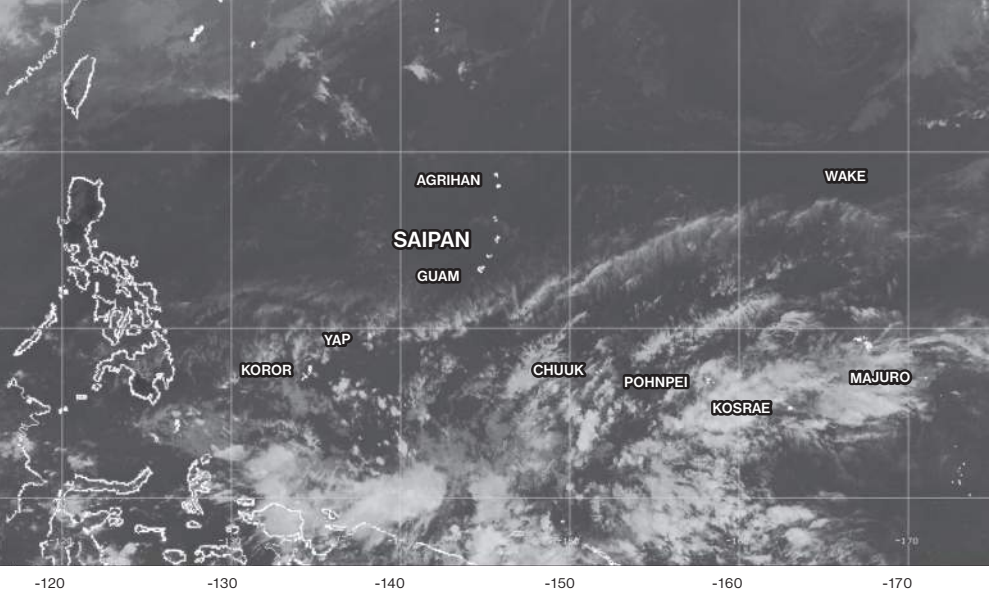
have been supported and populated to some extent by conservative fringe groups, armed militia members and conspiracy theorists such as Infowars’ Alex Jones, who have latched on to the coronavirus restrictions to push their dangerous worldviews. The protest in Sacramento, Calif., on Monday, for example, was co-organized by Freedom Angels, an anti-vaccination group that was at the forefront of opposition to the state’s tightening of childhood measles vaccinations.

The nation does need to get back to work soon, albeit with an abundance of caution, given the absence of proven treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. But the inability to test for the disease on a mass scale makes any effort to resume normal life a step into the dark. If people are going to risk their lives, and those of others, to protest anything, we wish it would at least be for a cause that might actually help. Like, say, demanding more testing.

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The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
89°	77°	89°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 5:42 AM, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate east winds and partly cloudy skies prevail. Satellite shows some modest showers approaching Saipan and Tinian with far fewer showers upstream of Guam and Rota. Buoys and altimetry indicate seas are still between 4 and 6 feet, mainly from the east.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 78°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	88° / 80°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	66° / 55°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:57 AM	6:32 PM
Friday	5:57 AM	6:33 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:33 PM
Sunday	5:56 AM	6:33 PM
Monday	5:55 AM	6:33 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:02 AM	6:42 PM	-
Friday	6:39 AM	7:30 PM	-
Saturday	7:19 AM	8:21 PM	-
Sunday	8:01 AM	9:13 PM	-
Monday	8:48 AM	10:07 PM	-

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AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	66° / 55°	
Beijing	Sunny	66° / 39°	
Hong Kong	Showers	73° / 64°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	84° / 72°	
London	Partly Cloudy	66° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	85° / 66°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	97° / 81°	
Melbourne	Showers	72° / 57°	
Miami	Sunny	84° / 77°	
New York	Sunny	54° / 40°	
Osaka	Rain	66° / 55°	
Paris	Sunny	73° / 52°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	59° / 45°	
Rome	Rain	63° / 52°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	75° / 58°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	63° / 54°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	54° / 37°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	61° / 48°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	61° / 47°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:55 AM	LOW TIDE	0.76	
7:32 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.84	
2:17 PM	LOW TIDE	0.28	
8:36 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.82	

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- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
• **Cashier & Customer Service**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4282
Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2282



Department of Public Works
• **Solid Waste Management Division**
• **Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill**
Open all week except Wednesday
7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-2745



Department of Finance
• **Division of Revenue & Taxation**
CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Tel: (670) 664-1000



Division of Customs Services
• **Airport:** OPEN DAILY
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• **Seaport:** Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• **Chalan Kanoa Post Office:**
Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM



Department of Public Lands
• CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54



Saipan Zoning Office
• Available via phone only
Monday - Thursday
7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
Call or email for more information



CNMI State Medicaid Agency
• Eligibility staff via phone only
Tuesday - Thursday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4880/4882
Accepting applications and supporting documents via drop-box at Medicaid Office. Medicaid application & renewal/redetermination forms must be original. Applications/forms available for pick up next to the drop-box or online at: www.medicaid.cnmi.mp



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
• Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
Email: maryann@ovrgov.net



Office of the Attorney General
• **Civil & Criminal Divisions**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600



Office of the Public Defender
• Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 234-6503



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
Tel: (670) 287-1475
- **Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call**
Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 287-2781 / 287-1773
Tinian: (670) 287-3268
Rota: (670) 287-2553
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**
For inquiries regarding parent eligibility requirements for CCDF Program:
Tel: (670) 783-8571 / (670) 783-8572
Email: dccajguerrero@gmail.com / ccdf.jrosario@gmail.com
- **Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (CCAC)**
For Recovery Arts Grant Application Submissions. Grant Guidelines are available at <http://www.cnmiartscouncil.org>
Tel.: (670) 287-4585
Email: parkeryobei@gmail.com
- **Historic Preservation Office (HPO)**
For Processing of Federal 106 Consultations Call
Tel: (670) 789-1986
Email: rchong.cnmihipo@gmail.com



• **Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)**
Benefit Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Application Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Application Submission:
Anytime via Drop-Box

Application Inquiries:
Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802

To download the NAP application and other forms go to dcca.gov.mp
Email: support@cnminap.gov.mp

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Business

Virus cancels events worldwide; opinions on reopening mixed

ATLANTA (AP)—Spain called off the Running of the Bulls in July, the U.S. scrapped the national spelling bee in June and Germany canceled Oktoberfest five months away, making it clear Tuesday that the effort to beat back the coronavirus and return to normal could be a long and dispiriting process.

Amid growing impatience over the shutdowns that have thrown tens of millions out of work, European countries continued to reopen in stages, while in the U.S., one state after another—mostly ones led by Republican governors—began taking steps to get back to business.

Business owners in the U.S. who got the go-ahead weighed whether to reopen, and some hesitated, in a sign that commerce won't necessarily bounce back right away.

Mark Lebos, owner of Strong Gym in Savannah, Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp announced that gyms and salons can reopen this week, said it would be professional negligence to do so right now.

"We are not going to be a vector of death and suffering," he said.

With deaths and infections still rising around the world, the push to reopen has set off warnings from health authorities that the crisis that has killed well over 170,000 people globally—including more than 45,000 in the U.S.—is far from over and that relaxing the stay-at-home orders too quickly could enable the virus to come surging back.

The economic damage mounted as oil prices suffered an epic collapse and stocks registered their worst loss in weeks on Wall Street.

The crisis hit home at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, which laid off 153 workers, including bartenders, cooks, dishwashers and housekeepers.

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday approved nearly \$500 billion in coronavirus aid for businesses, hospitals and testing after a deal was reached between Congress and the White House. Trump urged House members to quickly pass the measure.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said during the daily White House briefing Tuesday that while some big businesses obtained access to government loans under an earlier aid



AP
A woman carries a shopping bag as she walks on the sidewalk in downtown Chicago, Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Several major spring and summer events in Chicago have been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

package, its intent was to help mostly companies with 10 or fewer workers. He and the president said bigger businesses should return those funds.

Trump also said he will stop issuing certain immigration green cards for 60 days to limit competition for jobs and "protect American workers" already suffering in an economy devastated by the pandemic.

In Europe, meanwhile, Denmark, Austria, Spain and Germany began allowing some people back to work, in-

cluding hairdressers, dentists and construction workers, and some stores were cleared to reopen or will soon get the OK.

But in an indication that it will be a long time before life returns to normal, Spain canceled its Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, the more than 400-year-old event made world-famous by Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises." It was

also called off during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee in the U.S. was canceled. The competition has been held since 1925 and was last scrubbed in 1945, during World War II.

Germany called off the centuries-old Oktoberfest beer festival in Munich, which draws about 6 million visitors each year. It was previously

canceled during the two world wars; during a period of hyperinflation in Germany in 1923; and twice because of cholera outbreaks in the 1800s.

"We agreed that the risk is simply too high," Bavarian governor Markus Soeder said.

In Italy, Premier Giuseppe Conte confirmed that businesses can start reopening on May 4 but dashed any hopes of a full end to the country's strict lockdown any time soon, saying: "A decision of that kind would be irresponsible."

In the U.S., some states, including Tennessee, West Virginia and Colorado, announced plans this week to begin reopening in stages in the coming days. Sunbathers quickly flocked to the sand after some South Carolina beaches reopened with the governor's backing.

Chipotle agrees to record \$25 million fine over tainted food

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. agreed Tuesday to pay a record \$25 million fine to resolve criminal charges that it served tainted food that sickened more than 1,100 people in the U.S. in outbreaks from 2015 to 2018 and sent sales plunging.

The fast food company was charged in Los Angeles federal court with two counts of violating the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act by serving adulterated food that caused four outbreaks of norovirus, which causes diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal cramps, and a food poisoning incident.

The company admitted that poor safety practices, such as not keeping food at proper temperatures to prevent pathogen growth, sickened customers in Los Angeles and nearby Simi Valley, as well as Boston, Sterling, Virginia, and Powell, Ohio.

The string of outbreaks, which began in August 2015 in Simi Valley, came about two months before an E. coli outbreak at Chipotle spread to multiple states that temporarily

closed dozens of restaurants and hurt sales as other food scares emerged. The criminal case was not related to E. coli.

The Newport Beach, California-based company entered into a deferred prosecution agreement that will allow it to avoid conviction by continuing to improve its food safety program, following other rules and paying the record-setting fine for a food safety case, federal prosecutors said.

"Chipotle failed to ensure that its employees both understood and complied with its food safety protocols, resulting in hundreds of customers across the country getting sick," U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna said in a statement. "Today's steep penalty, coupled with the tens of millions of dollars Chipotle already has spent to upgrade its food safety program since 2015, should result in greater protections for Chipotle customers and remind others in the industry to review and improve their own health and safety practices."

The company said in a statement that it would con-

tinue improving food safety practices that include reducing the number of employees who touch food, testing the quality of raw ingredients and tracing the movement of food supplies to determine where a problem may have occurred.

"This settlement represents an acknowledgment of how seriously Chipotle takes food safety every day and is an opportunity to definitively turn the page on past events," Brian Niccol, chairman and chief executive officer, said.

Outbreaks of norovirus, which is spread easily by people mishandling food, began in Simi Valley when 234 Chipotle customers and employees became ill. An employee who vomited was sent home, but the illness was not reported internally, as required, and food safety procedures weren't implemented until two days later after multiple customers reported becoming ill.

In December 2015, 141 people reported norovirus type illnesses after visiting a Chipotle restaurant in Boston.

Criminal records keep small-business owners from aid program

WASHINGTON (AP)—Damon West was hoping the government's coronavirus rescue package for small-business owners would help replace the income he's lost now that he can't travel the country as a keynote speaker.

But then he got a call from his accountant. A question on the application form asked whether, within the last five years, he had been convicted of or pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony or "been placed on any form of parole or probation." Another asked whether anyone who owns at least 20% of the company was incarcerated, under indictment or on probation or parole. If so, they are ineligible.

It was a gut punch for West. In 2009, he was sentenced to life in prison but made parole in 2015 and now works as an author, teacher and speaker, visiting schools and correctional facilities to talk about

how he turned his life around.

"You go and you pay your debt, and you're still paying your bill," he said.

The Paycheck Protection Program, which already doled out \$350 billion and is now awaiting another cash infusion, is supposed to be a lifeline for businesses teetering on the edge, helping them stay afloat and keep their employees on the payroll during the pandemic. Independent contractors and the self-employed also qualify. But not, it turns out, if they have had certain run-ins with the law.

The Small Business Administration, which oversees the program, did not respond to questions about the reasoning. And Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Tuesday evening that there were no plans to lift the rules, which he said were less onerous than those originally envisioned. But ineligible

would-be applicants and their advocates say they are a slap in the face for those who have served their time, especially from an administration that has trumpeted second chances. They note many businesses run by formerly incarcerated people employ other people with criminal records who could be driven back to crime if they lose jobs.

Robert Rooks, co-founder of the Alliance for Safety and Justice, a national criminal justice reform organization, said he'd heard from multiple small-business owners frustrated by the provision.

"I'm hearing that people have worked their entire life to get to this place where they have something they can call their own. They've paid their debt to society, clawed their way to this point and should be able to get what everybody else is able to get to keep their business afloat," he said.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
23,018.88
-631.56
2.67%

S&P
2,736.56
-86.60
3.07%

NASDAQ
8,263.23
-297.50
3.48%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.5832
British Pound	0.8136
Canadian Dollar	1.4216
Chinese Yuan	6.9549
Euro	0.9218

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7502
Indian Rupee	76.1592
Japanese Yen	107.5330
Malaysian Ringgit	4.3518
New Zealand Dollar	1.6740
Philippine Peso	49.7661

Russian Ruble	75.8825
Singapore Dollar	1.4288
South Korean Won	1207.26
Swiss Franc	0.9695
Taiwan Dollar	29.3326
Thailand Baht	32.4900

Nation

Trump bars new immigration green cards, not temporary visas

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump announced what he described as a “temporary suspension of immigration into the United States” on Tuesday. But the executive order would bar only those seeking permanent residency, not temporary workers.

Trump said he would be placing a 60-day pause on the issuance of green cards in an effort to limit competition for jobs in a U.S. economy wrecked by the coronavirus. The order would include “certain exemptions,” he said, but

he declined to outline them, noting the order was still being crafted.

“By pausing immigration we’ll help put unemployed Americans first in line for jobs as America reopens, so important,” Trump said at the White House. “It would be wrong and unjust for Americans laid off by the virus to be replaced with new immigrant labor flown in from abroad.”

An administration official familiar with the plans, however, said the order will apply to foreigners seeking employment-

based green cards and relatives of green card holders who are not citizens. Americans wishing to bring immediate family will still be able to do so, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity before the plan was announced. About 1 million green cards were granted in the 2019 fiscal year, about half to spouses, children and parents of U.S. citizens.

By limiting his immigration measure to green cards, Trump was leaving untouched hundreds of thousands of foreign workers granted non-

immigrant visas each year, including farm workers, health care workers and software programmers. The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, estimated that some 110,000 green cards could be delayed during a two-month pause. Trump said he would consider extending the restrictions, depending on economic conditions at the time.

Trump has long advocated restrictions on both legal and illegal immigration and has raised concerns for years about foreigners competing with

American citizens for jobs.

But he denied he was using the virus to make good on a longstanding campaign promise during an election year. “No, I’m not doing that all,” he said. The president has also used the crisis to push other stalled priorities, from tax reform to dramatic border restrictions.

Trump has often pivoted to his signature issue of immigration when he’s under criticism. It’s one he believes helped him win the 2016 election and one that continues to animate his loyal base of supporters heading into what is expected to be a brutal reelection fight. It has also served as a useful tool for distracting from news he’d prefer removed from the headlines.

Much of the immigration system has already ground to a halt because of the pandemic.

Almost all visa processing by the State Department has been suspended for weeks. Travel to the U.S. has been restricted from much of the globe. And Trump has used the virus to effectively end asylum at U.S. borders, including turning away children who arrive by themselves and putting a hold on refugee resettlement—something Congress, the courts and international law hadn’t previously allowed.

Criticism of Trump’s announcement was swift, especially his timing during the pandemic. Ali Noorani, president of the National Immigration Forum, noted that thousands of foreign-born health care workers are currently treating people with COVID-19 and working in critical sectors of the economy.



President Donald Trump speaks about the coronavirus in the James Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House, Tuesday, April 21, 2020, in Washington.

Virus misinformation flourishes in online protest groups

CHICAGO (AP)—Hundreds, sometimes thousands, of posts fly in the new Facebook groups daily.

The coronavirus numbers are fake, some of the social media videos claim. “Social distancing is the new way to control you, your family and your behavior,” another commenter warns. Others say the pandemic is an overblown hoax.

The loose network of Facebook groups spurring protests of stay-at-home orders across the country have fast become a hotbed of misinformation, conspiracy theories and skepticism around the coronavirus pandemic. Launched in recent weeks by pro-gun advocacy groups and conservative activists, the pages are repositories of Americans’ suspicion and anxiety—often fueled by notions floated by television personalities or President Donald Trump himself and amplified

by social media accounts.

In a matter of days, the Facebook pages have mobilized protests at state capitols and collectively gained an audience of nearly 1 million followers on Facebook, according to The Associated Press’ analysis of the groups.

There’s little basis in reality for many of the claims on the sites. The coronavirus has infected millions of people worldwide, and the U.S. has recorded more deaths—43,000—than anywhere else in the world, according to a Johns Hopkins University count. Stay-at-home orders have been used by governments across the world—and the political spectrum—to try to contain the spread, as recommended by the world’s top health officials.

But the power of suspicion is apparent in the Facebook groups. A private group was key in enlisting people for a

“Liberate Minnesota” march outside Democratic Gov. Tim Walz’s home Friday, despite his order limiting large gatherings. Trump backed the protesters on Twitter, calling to “LIBERATE MINNESOTA” right before the protest kicked off.

“We recruited some trusted friends, threw it up on Facebook Sunday night,” said conservative activist Michele Even, who oversees two Facebook groups in Wisconsin and Minnesota with a collective following of 100,000. “By Friday, we had over a thousand shares for the event.”

Under pressure after a spate of nationwide protests organized on its site, Facebook said Monday that it would ban events that don’t follow social distancing rules.

“Events that defy government’s guidance on social distancing aren’t allowed on Facebook,” the company said

in a brief statement that did not explain how it would evaluate whether the events violate local ordinances. Facebook said it removed postings for events in California, New Jersey and Nebraska.

Users on the platform are still promoting future stay-at-home protests in Wisconsin, Virginia and Illinois. One Facebook ad calls for people to “descend on the Capitol building and surrounding streets, either on foot or in vehicles,” this Saturday in Denver. Some Facebook users are promoting a “drive-in” protest called Operation Gridlock to clog roads surrounding state capitols.

The movement is also becoming increasingly partisan online, with prominent conservatives urging their followers to protest Democratic governors, despite stay-at-home orders coming down in nearly every state, including some led by Republican governors.

Senate approves \$483B virus aid deal, sends it to House

WASHINGTON (AP)—A \$483 billion coronavirus aid package flew through the Senate on Tuesday after Congress and the White House reached a deal to replenish a small-business payroll fund and provided new money for hospitals and testing.

Passage was swift and unanimous, despite opposition from conservative Republicans. President Donald Trump tweeted his support, pledging to sign it into law. It now goes to the House, with votes set for Thursday.

“I urge the House to pass the bill,” Trump said at the White House.

After nearly two weeks of negotiations and deadlock, Congress and the White House reached agreement Tuesday on the nearly \$500 billion package—the fourth as Washington strains to respond to the health and economic crisis.

“The Senate is continuing to stand by the American people,” said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to an almost empty chamber.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said the bill was made “better and broader” after Democrats forced the inclusion of money for hospitals and testing.

A copy of the measure was provided to The Associated Press by a GOP aide.

Most of the funding, \$331 billion, would go to boost a small-business payroll loan program that ran out of money last week. An additional \$75

billion would be given to hospitals, and \$25 billion would be spent to boost testing for the virus, a key step in building the confidence required to reopen state economies.

Missing from the package, however, was extra funding for state and local governments staring down budget holes and desperate to avert furloughs and layoffs of workers needed to keep cities running.

Trump said he was open to including in a subsequent virus aid package fiscal relief for state and local government—which Democrats wanted for the current bill—along with infrastructure projects.

Not all Republicans are backing Trump on the deal.

Two conservative Republicans, Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., voiced opposition during Tuesday’s session but did not halt passage.

Lee said it was “unacceptable” that the full Senate was not present and voting in the pro forma session as Congress shuttered during the virus outbreak.

Paul said no amount of federal funding will be able to salvage a shuttered economy. “Deaths from infectious disease will continue, but we cannot continue to indefinitely quarantine,” said Paul, who tested positive for the virus last month but has since recovered.

The House is being called to Washington for a Thursday vote, said Rep. Steny Hoyer, the House majority leader.

Asia

Southeast Asian countries struggling vs coronavirus



AP

A woman stands near the barbed wire outside a locked down building during the movement control order in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Monday, April 20, 2020.

Few Southeast Asian nations enacted serious measures to contain the coronavirus until their own number of cases starting climbing sharply. Indonesia, as the most populous country in the region, is the major concern, but all face challenges. Their limited capacity to do widespread testing means that official coronavirus counts are likely unrealistically low.

A look at the state of the coronavirus in Southeast Asia, with confirmed cases, deaths and recoveries through Monday:

SINGAPORE: 8,014 cases, 11 deaths, 801 recoveries

The island nation's small size and nanny state government quickly facilitated contact tracing and enforcement of restrictions. But its case totals exploded last week as the coronavirus rampaged through the tightly packed dormitories housing migrant workers who perform essential services.

INDONESIA: 6,760 cases, 590 deaths, 747 recoveries

The government did not confirm the first case until March 2, but Indonesia now has the most deaths from COVID-19 of any Asian country other than China. President Joko Widodo has acknowledged that the government kept the public misinformed about the state of the coronavirus in the country. He recently has stepped up measures to combat the virus, though a lack of testing in the country of more than 260 million people remains a major problem.

PHILIPPINES: 6,459 cases, 428 deaths, 613 recoveries

President Rodrigo Duterte, known for his hardcore war on drugs, locked down the main northern island of Luzon by restricting travel to and from the region, which includes Manila, the capital. A national emergency was declared with tough penalties for disobeying quarantine and curfew orders. But enforcement was lax, and Duterte is now threatening martial law-style actions.

MALAYSIA: 5,425 cases, 89 deaths, 3,295 recoveries

Malaysia's cases started to spike in early March when hundreds linked to a mass religious gathering at a mosque outside Kuala Lumpur were diagnosed with COVID-19. The battle against the coronavirus was hindered by an unexpected change of government at the beginning of March, even though travel restrictions and closures of schools and nonessential businesses were ordered.

THAILAND: 2,792 cases, 47 deaths, 1,999 recoveries

Thailand on Jan. 13 announced the first confirmed coronavirus case outside of China, a Chinese visitor from Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the pandemic started late last year. But with marginal daily increases in cases through the end of February, the government failed to act until two coronavirus clusters — from a social gathering and a kickboxing match in Bangkok — rocketed the numbers up,

finally forcing Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to declare a national emergency.

VIETNAM: 268 cases, no deaths, 214 recoveries

Vietnam acted relatively early to shut down travel from neighboring China and concentrated its efforts on contact tracing. Its heavily centralized one-party Communist government mobilized down to the local level to ensure community observance of virus-fighting restrictions.

OTHERS

The other four Southeast Asian countries — Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos — each have fewer than 150 confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

Demographic and geographical factors minimize the threat in Brunei, a rich sultanate with a population of less than half a million, and Laos, a landlocked country with a widely dispersed population.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed confidence that his countrymen held virtual immunity to the disease and even discouraged the wearing of face masks until a flurry of cases among foreign tourists and the explosion of cases in Europe and the United States changed his mind.

There is little doubt that Myanmar's poor health care system was responsible for its failure to report its first case until March 23, which inhibited earlier action to fight its spread.

Both Cambodia and Myanmar have since imposed travel and other restrictions, but remain ill-equipped to cope with any large coronavirus caseload.

World

AFTER RAMPAGE IN NOVA SCOTIA

Canadian police say 22 victims

TORONTO (AP)—Canadian police said Tuesday they believe there are at least 22 victims after a gunman wearing a police uniform shot people in their homes and set fires in a rampage across rural communities in Nova Scotia over the weekend.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said they have recovered remains from some of the destroyed homes. Earlier, authorities had said at least 18 people were killed in the 12-hour attack.

Officials said the suspect, identified as 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman, was shot and later died on Sunday. Authorities did not provide further details or give a motive for the killings.

The dead include a 17-year-old as well as a police officer, a police news release said. All the other victims were adults and included both men and women. There were 16 crime scenes in five different communities in northern and central Nova Scotia, it said.

"Some of the victims were known to Gabriel Wortman and were targeted while others were not known to him," the police statement said.

Authorities also confirmed Wortman was wearing an authentic police uniform and

one of the cars he used "was a very real look-alike RCMP vehicle."

"This is an unprecedented incident that has resulted in incredible loss and heartbreak for countless families and loved ones. So many lives will be forever touched," the police statement said.

In an earlier news release authorities had said they believed there were 23 victims, but Royal Canadian Mounted Police spokesman Daniel Brien later clarified the death toll included 22 victims and the gunman.

As fears mounted that more dead would be found in burned out homes, a young man said Tuesday that his grandparents were missing and believed dead after their log cabin was set ablaze during the attack.

Justin Zahl told The Associated Press he finally heard from police after frantic calls for information and seeing images of his grandparents' home in the rural town of Portapique burned to the ground, with their cars in the driveway.

It was not immediately clear, however, if they were among the remains police said were found.

Police teams were spread out across the 16 crime

scenes including the neighborhood where the rampage began late Saturday on Portapique Beach Road, where the suspect lived.

Police have warned the death toll will almost certainly rise as investigators comb through homes destroyed by fire.

Zahl said he last heard from his grandmother early Saturday evening via iMessage on her iPad.

"They were angels," he said, adding that the couple were like parents to him and his 19-year-old brother, Riley. "He was the smartest man I knew, and could hold a conversation with anyone," he said of the grandfather.

He said John Zahl, in his late 60s, and Elizabeth Joanne Thomas, in her late 50s, lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, before retiring to their dream home in Nova Scotia in 2017 after falling in love with the place on a visit. Justin and his brother lived with them for a while but both young men no longer do and neither was at the home during the attack, he said.

Authorities said Wortman made his car look like a Royal Canadian Mounted Police cruiser allowing him to travel easily within a 30-mile (50-kilometer) area.

UN food agency chief: World on brink of 'a hunger pandemic'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The head of the U.N. food agency warned Tuesday that, as the world is dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, it is also "on the brink of a hunger pandemic" that could lead to "multiple famines of biblical proportions" within a few months if immediate action isn't taken.

World Food Program Executive Director David Beasley told the U.N. Security Council that even before COVID-19 became an issue, he was telling world leaders that "2020 would be facing the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II." That's because of wars in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, locust swarms in Africa, frequent natural disasters and economic crises including in Lebanon, Congo, Sudan and Ethiopia, he said.

Beasley said today 821 million people go to bed hungry every night all over the world, a further 135 million people are facing "crisis levels of hunger or worse," and a new World Food Program

analysis shows that as a result of COVID-19 an additional 130 million people "could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020."

He said in the video briefing that WFP is providing food to nearly 100 million people on any given day, including "about 30 million people who literally depend on us to stay alive."

Beasley, who is recovering from COVID-19, said if those 30 million people can't be reached, "our analysis shows that 300,000 people could starve to death every single day over a three-month period"—and that doesn't include increased starvation due to the coronavirus.

"In a worst-case scenario, we could be looking at famine in about three dozen countries, and in fact, in 10 of these countries we already have more than one million people per country who are on the verge of starvation," he said.

According to WFP, the 10 countries with the worst food crises in 2019 were Yemen,

Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, Sudan, Nigeria and Haiti.

Beasley said in many countries the food crisis is the result of conflict.

But he said he raised the prospect of "a hunger pandemic" because "there is also a real danger that more people could potentially die from the economic impact of COVID-19 than from the virus itself."

The WFP chief said lockdowns and economic recession are expected to lead to major income losses for the working poor.

He pointed to a sharp drop in overseas remittances that will hurt countries such as Haiti, Nepal and Somalia; a loss of tourism revenue which, for example, will damage Ethiopia where it accounts for 47 percent of total exports; and the collapse of oil prices which will have a significant impact in lower-income countries like South Sudan where oil accounts for almost 99 percent of total exports.

Environment

ORLANDO, Fla.—The first Earth Day was an uprising for humankind to do better than smother its coasts with crude-oil blowouts, poison wildlife with factory and farm chemicals, and irradiate the atmosphere by testing nuclear weapons.

Nearing the 50th anniversary on Wednesday, amid the death toll, economic mayhem and stay-at-home orders of the coronavirus outbreak, Earth Day may have never been so relevant for a planet more vulnerable than previously thought.

COVID-19 is a warning, environmentalists say, that even in times of soaring stocks, accelerating technology, plentiful consumer goods and growing cities, civilization is not all that resilient.

The world's prime environmental fear is climate change and its potential to drown cities, disrupt food supplies, deliver new diseases and be far more disastrous than COVID-19.

University of Miami geography professor Harold Wanless, long a proponent of an urgent response to climate change, said the coronavirus outbreak may have been a needed revelation.

"It has demonstrated what I don't think any of us thought could have happened," Wanless said. "We are really capable of doing surprising things quickly. If we had talked about this sort of response on Jan. 15, it would have been, 'No way would these things ever be happening.'"

The first Earth Day brought formidable federal laws protecting the nation's air, water and wildlife, but Florida has become only more tormented by a widening array of environments troubles.

"Since the first Earth Day, Florida's resident population has more than doubled, and our tourist visitation has grown six-fold," said Julie Wraithmell, executive director of Audubon Florida.

In Central Florida more recently, Sanford's airport has joined a worldwide legal battle against chemical makers, alleging that their toxic, firefighting foams threaten human health, ecosystems and water supplies. Orlando's electric utility is being sued by east Orange County residents, who blame radioactive contamination of their communities on nearby power plants burning coal.

In South Florida, the city



PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS TOM ATKESON/U.S. COAST GUARD/TNS

Multiple Coast Guard helicopters, planes and cutters responded to rescue the Deepwater Horizon's 126 person crew.

On anniversary of Earth Day and BP spill, coronavirus reveal PLANET NOT SO RESILIENT

By KEVIN SPEAR
ORLANDO SENTINEL

of Fort Lauderdale earlier this year was fined nearly \$2 million for what state officials deemed as the largest outbreak of sewage spills in state history, a deluge that flowed largely into the city's vast and prized canals.

The statewide damage from nutrient pollution, from mishandled sewage, fertilizer and storm water, has plagued the state for decades and yet has worsened in recent years in springs, rivers and coastal estuaries.

The funneling of polluted water from Florida's huge Lake Okeechobee to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, triggering eruptions of toxic, foul-smelling and wildlife-killing algae, remains an ongoing threat.

Unrecognized 50 years ago, the nation and planet now face the most profound environmental danger yet: rising global temperatures that, among mounting catastrophes, have spawned drought and wildfires in Western states and stronger hurricanes and rising seas along Florida's coast.

"This upcoming 50th Earth Day anniversary is an opportunity to take stock of where we stand when it comes to the battle to live sustainably on this planet," said Michael Mann, a prominent climatologist and geophysicist at Pennsylvania State University.

"COVID-19 and the loss of life that has resulted from it is a tragedy," Mann said. "But the pandemic has also been a teaching moment, an opportunity to take away some important lessons. One of those lessons is that it is possible to consume fewer resources and still lead our lives."

In Florida, opposition to offshore drilling has been perhaps the most unifying environmental cause for Floridians, allying the most progressive activists with the most conservative politicians and with all beach lovers.

For many, the essence of Earth Day on April 22 became inseparable from the specter of the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20 a decade ago.

The inaugural Earth Day

owed some of its momentum to the nation's revulsion over the Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969. Crude oil massacred marine life in Southern California coastal waters.

The BP disaster, from a blowout unleashed by the drilling vessel Deepwater Horizon, lasted five months and dumped more than 200 million gallons of crude into the Gulf of Mexico south of Louisiana.

More than killing mammals, fish and birds, the submerged oil, as advanced research techniques found, severely altered phytoplankton, the basic organisms that convert sunlight to biomass that feeds all of the food web, said Samantha Joye, a microbiologist at the University of Georgia.

"This lasted much, much longer than the signature of visible oil," Joye said.

Prey fish were wiped out, corals were damaged and thousands of square miles of seabed were coated with a dirty blizzard of "oil snow," Joye said.

Florida, particularly depen-

dent on tourism and vulnerable to economic and environmental disruption, finally became acquainted with another devastating foe it had long feared. It took little more than a month for the BP slick of congealing crude to find the state's vulnerability.

Morning beachgoers at Pensacola Beach came across orange-brown blobs of oil, from dime-sized to lumpier, slimier chunks the size and shape of fried eggs. Within weeks, Western Panhandle beaches were deserted, crushing the region's economy.

"I call it the 'quafecta' that started with Hurricane Ivan that destroyed 85% of Pensacola Beach, followed by the real estate bubble popping, followed by the worldwide economic crisis," said Julian MacQueen, founder and chairman of Innisfree Hotels, which owns Hamptons, Hiltons and other hotels from Panama City to east Alabama beaches. "Just when you thought it was safe again, BP hit."

Now he's considering a label for five disasters. The coronavirus has again emptied the Panhandle's famed beaches.

"We are used to the hurricanes," MacQueen said. "We have a plan and we have insurance. The big gut punch now is that there is no business-interruption insurance."

John Amos, president of SkyTruth, a nonprofit environmental, watchdog group that specializes in satellite imagery, said Florida should be wary of a blowout more destructive than BP's.

"Deepwater Horizon is not the worst-case scenario for an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico," Amos said.

The BP spill resulted from human errors and violations of drilling procedures.

But the Gulf of Mexico seafloor is a minefield of potentially catastrophic mud slides that could bowl over rigs containing multiple wells with oil flowing to pipelines, Amos said.

Worsening the risk is that most drilling has migrated into very deep waters of the Gulf, where technology would be hard-pressed to control a blowout, he said.

Jeff Masters, a meteorologist at Scientific American co-founder of the web-based Weather Underground, said there is a common thread to the disasters and crises hitting Florida and the U.S., and that thread is worth paying attention to.

"Our lamentable lack of preparedness for and response to the pandemic bears similarity to what happened with the BP oil spill and the recent spate of intense hurricanes that have hit the U.S.," Masters said.

"Our reactive efforts ended up being far more expensive than if we had proactively prepared," Masters said of responses to the spill, storms and the coronavirus outbreak. "Accelerating climate change will cause far more damage to society than the COVID-19 pandemic will end up causing, and we need to learn from its lessons and take strong science-based government action."

The effort will come with a price, environmentalists say, but potentially with a critically needed payoff.

"For a long time now, Florida's been about growth above everything. Climate change means its future is going to be about retraction," said Bill McKibben, a prominent U.S. writer and voice on climate change. "But that can be done gracefully, yielding a state that's harder, more resilient and still a place of great beauty."

Life & Style

Pandemic and chill:

Netflix adds a cool 16M subscribers

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP)—Netflix picked up nearly 16 million global subscribers during the first three months of the year, helping cement its status as one of the world's most essential services in times of isolation or crisis.

The quarter spanned the beginning of stay-at-home orders in the U.S. and around the world, a response to the coronavirus pandemic that apparently led millions to latch onto Netflix for entertainment and comfort when most had nowhere to be but home.

Netflix more than doubled the quarterly growth it predicted in January, well before the COVID-19 outbreak began to shut

down many major economies. It was the biggest three-month gain in the 13-year history of Netflix's streaming service.

The numbers—released Tuesday as part of Netflix's first-quarter earnings report—support a growing belief that video streaming is likely to thrive even as the overall U.S. economy sinks into its first recession in more than a decade.

"Our small contribution to these difficult times is to make home confinement a little more bearable," Netflix CEO Reed Hastings said while speaking to investors during a video call from a bedroom.

Investor optimism about Netflix's prospects propelled

the company's stock to new highs recently, a sharp contrast with the decline in the broader market.

Netflix's shares initially surged in after-hours trading after the first-quarter report came out, although they soon fell back. One reason: The strengthening U.S. dollar will likely depress the company's revenue from outside the U.S., which could dampen gains from some of its fastest growing markets.

Currency effects also limited Netflix revenue growth to 17%, for a total of \$5.8 billion, even though the company ended March with nearly 183 million worldwide subscribers, a 23% increase from the same time last

year. Netflix earned \$709 million in the first quarter, nearly tripling its profit from last year.

Netflix shares edged up by less than 1% in Tuesday's extended trading to \$435.69, leaving them below last week's record high of \$449.52.

Even though it faces plenty of competition, Netflix appears better positioned to take advantage of the surging demand for TV shows and movies largely because of its head start in video streaming.

Since beginning its foray into original programming seven years ago, Netflix has built up a deep catalog that can feed viewer appetites even though the pandemic response

has shut down production on many new shows.

That stoppage could hurt Netflix as well, although analysts

at Canaccord Genuity believe its video library will serve as a "content moat" that can keep most competitors at bay.

Concert special and Jordan doc entice homebound TV viewers

NEW YORK (AP)—Lady Gaga, Michael Jordan and the remote Rolling Stones provided television entertainment over the weekend for millions of Americans homebound because of the coronavirus.

Gaga helped organize the "One World: Together at Home" concert that featured musicians like the Stones, Paul McCartney, Jennifer Lopez, Elton John and Lizzo. Shown live Saturday night across 26 networks, it reached 20.7 million people, the Nielsen company said.

That's about on par with

similar benefit concerts for Haiti earthquake victims in 2010, which attracted 24.1 million people, and a Hurricane Katrina show seen by 22.1 million people in 2005.

Sports-starved ESPN recorded its biggest audience ever for a documentary on Sunday with the first two of a 10-part series, "The Last Dance," about the final championship season for Jordan and the Chicago Bulls.

The first hour was seen by 6.3 million viewers and the second hour by 5.8 million on Sunday, Nielsen said.

Queen Elizabeth II marks 94th birthday without fanfare

LONDON (AP)—Britain marked Queen Elizabeth II's 94th birthday with silence Tuesday, as the nation in lockdown amid the COVID-19 pandemic forgoes the usual gun salutes and ringing of bells.

With thousands dead amid the outbreak, the monarch decided that the celebratory display of military firepower would not be appropriate. Nor will there be a celebratory peal of bells at Westminster Abbey, as the church where the queen was married and crowned is currently closed.

The royal family took to social media to share images of Elizabeth as she marked the oc-

casion—but in keeping with social distancing rules, there were no visits.

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, joined by their son Archie Mountbatten-Windsor, held a video call with to wish her a happy birthday. Other family members were also expected to telephone and video call the monarch privately to deliver their birthday messages.

The royal family also shared private family footage of the monarch as a young princess. The Royal Collection Trust archive film showed Elizabeth playing on a seesaw and in a garden with her sister, the late Princess Margaret.



Queen Elizabeth

Film adaptation of new 'Hunger Games' book is in the works

NEW YORK (AP)—The next "Hunger Games" book is coming out next month, and a movie version is now being planned.

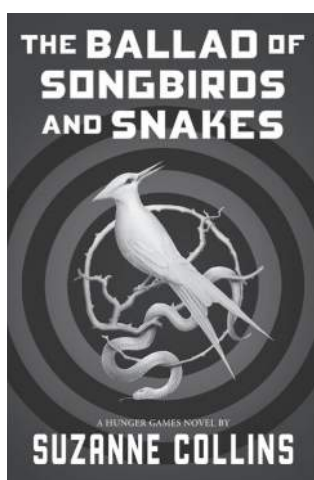
Lionsgate is working on an adaptation of Suzanne Collins' "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," a prequel to her three "Hunger Games" novels that will be released May 19. Collins' Dystopian series, which includes "The Hunger Games," "Catching Fire" and "Mockingjay," has sold tens of millions copies worldwide and is the basis for four Lionsgate movies that earned nearly \$3 billion and starred Jennifer Lawrence as the heroine Katniss Everdeen.

For the new movie, Collins will serve as executive producer and write the film's treatment. The screenplay will be by Michael Arndt, an Oscar winner for "Little

Miss Sunshine," a nominee for "Toy Story 3" and one of the writers for the adaptation of "Catching Fire." Francis Lawrence returns as director after making the three previous "Hunger Games" movies. Nina Jacobson will again produce, along with Brad Simpson.

A movie deal has long seemed inevitable. When Collins' book was announced last year, Lionsgate Motion Picture Group Chairman Joe Drake told the AP that the company had "been communicating with her during the writing process."

But with movie productions halted by the coronavirus pandemic, no release date has been set and casting has not begun. The film will take place in Collins' fictional Panem, and center on 18-year-old Coriolanus Snow, the future president, played in



This cover image released by Scholastic shows "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," a Hunger Games novel by Suzanne Collins, to be published on May 19.

AP

the earlier movies by Donald Sutherland.

"Lionsgate has always been the cinematic home of 'The Hunger Games,' and I'm delighted to be returning to them

with this new book," Collins said in a statement Tuesday. "From the beginning, they have treated the source material with great respect, honoring the thematic and narrative elements of the story, and assembling an incredible team both in front of and behind the camera. It's such a pleasure to be reuniting with Nina, Francis, and Michael to adapt the novel to the screen, and having them share their remarkable talents, once again, with the world of Panem."

Drake said in a statement that Collins' new novel is "creatively thrilling and takes this world to complex new dimensions that open up amazing cinematic possibilities."

"We're thrilled to reunite this filmmaking team with this very unique franchise, and we can't wait to begin production," Drake said.

Mom on fixed income supports a house full of freeloaders

DEAR ABBY: My grandson, his girlfriend and, recently, my son (who had to move in) are living with me. She is the only one working. My grandson has been sitting on his butt the last 2 1/2 years and does minimal work here in my home. All three of these "adults" live here for free. I am 79 and on a fixed income. I pay for everything.

They were supposed to be saving money so they could get a place of their own. That's a big joke. All they do is spend, spend, spend. They sleep all day and play games on their computers all night. I have seriously considered shutting off the internet (which I pay for) to see what they would do.

I have been talking to a counselor due to my stress and anger issues. The counselor has strongly advised me to evict them. My daughter told me if I do, I'll never see her or my two young grandchildren again. She means it.

I'm tired of being the caregiver. I feel used, but can't set boundaries very well. I'm also afraid of my 24-year-old grandson, who has terrible anger issues and who put his fist through a wall when I called him lazy. Should I put them out or, to keep peace in the family, continue to let them use me?

USED UP

DEAR USED UP: There will never be peace in your family as long as you allow yourself to be held hostage by

threats and intimidation. Your anger and boundary issues will resolve themselves if you act on the advice your therapist is giving you and evict these parasites.

First, discuss this with a lawyer to see what steps you must take, and because you fear your grandson will become violent, you may need help from the authorities to guarantee your safety from him when he goes. As to your daughter, I predict she'll keep the grandchildren from you only until she needs something — so be prepared. And please, continue talking to your therapist, who seems to have more of your interests at heart than your family members.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I are in our mid-40s with two kids (9 and 6). We are in the early stages of estate planning, and of course the topic of who would look after our kids has been discussed.

Our first choice has lovingly agreed to have our kids join their family if my wife and I should die. However, many estate planning forms ask if there is a secondary option on who we want to be our children's guardians in case our primary choice can no longer fulfill that role. How do we tactfully ask our second choice if they are willing to be the backup? I worry that the couple may be offended that they aren't No. 1, and this may cause tension and seriously damage our relationship with them.

PARENTS IN A PREDICAMENT

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



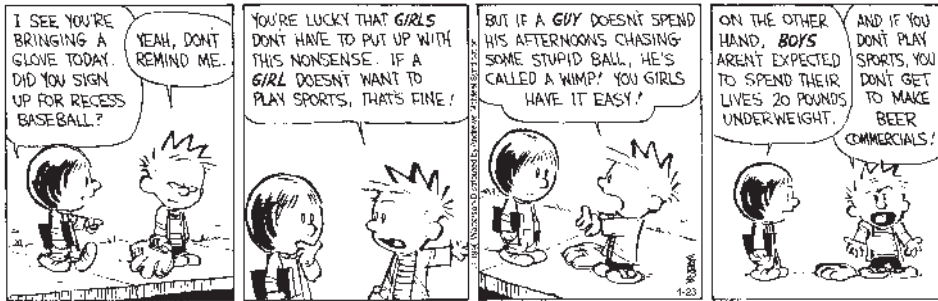
DEAR PARENTS: Do not offer apologies or explanations unless you must. Simply ask the backups if they would be willing to step in "should the need arise." If you are pressed about why they are not your first choice, answer honestly. Your reasons should be respected. This is not a popularity contest; it is a serious consideration for the future of your children.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



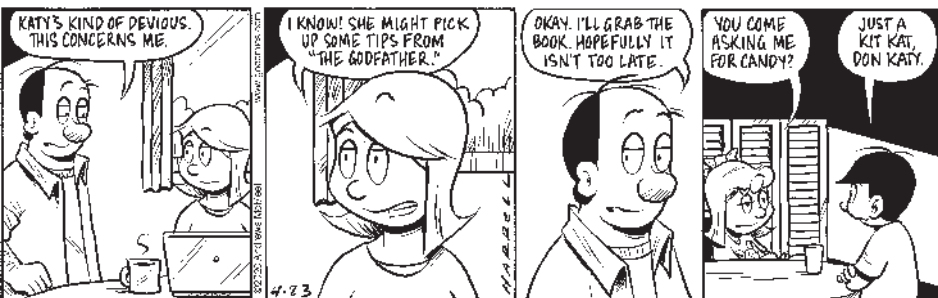
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Thaw
5 Chignon
8 Actress
12 Sharif of "Funny Girl"
13 Chou En-
14 Epidermis
15 "Rent" role
16 Wall St. wheeler-dealer
17 Pro votes
18 Gets up
20 Spill the beans
22 Crunchy sweet-and-salty snack
26 More confident
29 Actor Harrison
30 Noon, on a sundial
31 Coup d'
32 More, to Manuel
33 Suffix with song or gab
34 Shred
35 Mas' mates

DOWN

36 Relaxes
37 Comet-like brass instrument
40 Tidy
41 Orison
45 TV clown
47 Tolkien creature
49 Ripped
50 Regretted
51 Scottish river
52 Victor's cry
53 Anger
54 Lay down the lawn
55 Nile queen, familiarly
1 Send forth
3 Tibetan monk
4 Bauble
5 Explosion
6 Former Mideast org.
7 Small bites
8 Sir — Newton
9 Luxury stadium locales
10 Fib
11 Reply (Abbr.)
19 Aachen article
21 Superman foe Luthor
23 Dumpster filler
24 Get up
25 Little lice
26 Feudal slave
27 Gas co., for one
28 Grimm character who let her hair down
32 Soda fountain orders
33 Enthusias
35 Shell game item
36 Blunder
38 Crystal-lined stone
39 Chose
42 Caterwaul
43 Buffalo's county
44 Nevada city
45 "It's c-c-cold!"
46 Gigi's "yes"
48 Opposite of paleo-

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-23

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dev Patel, 30; Jaime King, 41; John Cena, 43; George Lopez, 59.

Happy Birthday: Do your best to make a positive difference this year. Focus on helping others, but not at the expense of doing what's best for you. Change begins within, and when you achieve the personal growth that brings you contentment, satisfaction and gratitude, you will make better decisions. Work with what you have, and avoid uncertainty and loss. Your numbers are 7, 12, 21, 27, 33, 42, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let guilt step in and take over. If something doesn't feel right, be brave and walk away. Trust your instincts and your ability to reach your goals on your own if necessary. Don't share or present prematurely. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Slow down, think and proceed with caution. If you aren't fully prepared, don't feel pressured to make a change. It's OK to be different or to refuse to follow the crowd. Stay within your comfort zone, and don't look back. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Apply experience to overcome temptation someone dangles in front of you. Being able to say no will help you stay on track and accomplish what you set out to do. Decisive physical action will give you the power to control your future. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Make the most out of whatever situation you encounter. You may not like change, but fighting what's inevitable will only make matters

worse. Be innovative, and you'll find a way to turn a negative into a positive. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Think before you leap into something unfamiliar. Don't get drawn in to someone's melodrama or let anyone interfere in your affairs. An encounter with someone you have worked with will encourage personal growth and a healthier lifestyle. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Raise your awareness, learn something new, check out travel documentaries, educate yourself and try new things. You are ready for a change, and embracing what life has to offer will make the transition easier. Don't share your plans until you have everything in place. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Keep moving, get physical and avoid interference. Do something unique or get involved in a social event that will bring you in touch with like-minded people. A personal change that's trendy and eye-catching will draw positive attention. Romance is favored. ★★★

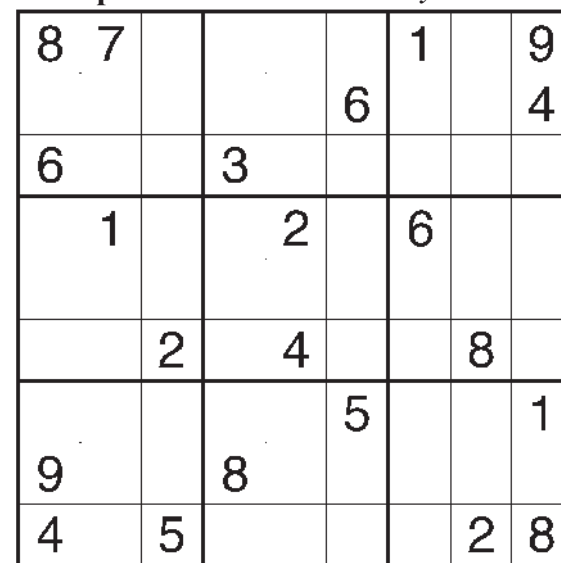
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Be open to suggestions, but when it comes time to get things done, follow your instincts, use what you know works best for you and pursue your dreams. A partnership will face changes. Don't waste time arguing; do what's necessary. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Look over your choices, and consider the best way to spend your time. Physical pursuits will bring the highest satisfaction, and networking and enjoying time spent with a friend or lover will ease stress. Romance is on the rise. ★★★

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



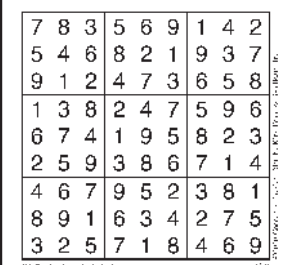
Difficulty Level ★★★

4/23

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Big Tally Level ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Do what you do best. Distance yourself from anyone negative or critical. An argument will result in a family feud. Make physical changes to your surroundings, or alter your current living conditions. Strive for greater freedom, comfort and happiness. ★★★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Watch out for someone using persuasive tactics to get you involved in something that doesn't interest you. Don't overreact or take on too much. Concentrate on what's important to you. Make a personal lifestyle change or update your appearance. ★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Make plans with someone you haven't seen for some time, or attend a reunion. How you delegate your time will make a difference in the way your future unfolds. The information and experience you gather will impact the decisions you make. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are materialistic, persistent and trendy. You are outgoing and changeable. Visit EugeniaLast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

WRITING CHECKS

Solution: 9 letters

L A T O T I D E R C C R W T S
A O E R N A M E D H V R H I S
N T M A U E C O E O I O G S E
O I I E O O L C I T U N T O R
S B T Y M L K D E S A X N P D
R E P P A S K M A T E O I E D
E D A R P L P N U T I P R D A
P N Y C R L D R A T E M P I P
Y E M T O I E I C B L A N K D
P P E Y C B M A I L E T H S E
A S N N E A R R E G I S T E R
P E T S S F X R E B M U N E D
E A E H S A C E T Z E R O Y N
R E G N I N R A E T O N M A U
F S S E N I S U B O O K S P H

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4/23

Address, Amount, Bank, Bills, Blank, Books, Business, Cash, Checks, Company, Credit, Date, Debit, Deposit, Dollar, Earning, Employ, Exact, Fees, Fraction, Hundred, Mail, Memo, Month, Name, Note, Number, Page, Paper, Payees, Payment, Personal, Print, Process, Register, Signature, Spend, Stamp, Step, Text, Thousand, Time, Total, Void, Write, Year, Zero

Yesterday's Answer: Southern

The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Gronkowski to reunite with Brady in Tampa Bay



TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Four-time All Pro tight end Rob Gronkowski has agreed to a reunion with Tom Brady.

The agent for the retired New England star confirmed Tuesday that pending completion of a physical Gronkowski has agreed to play for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who are acquiring his rights from the Patriots.

"Pending the physical, Rob has agreed to play for Tampa this season," agent Drew Rosenhaus said.

The deal would reunite the 30-year-old Gronkowski with Brady, who signed a two-year, \$50 million contract with the Bucs last month.

Gronkowski, who'll turn 31 on May 14, retired in March 2019 after nine seasons with the Patriots, who drafted him in the second round in 2010. He has one year left on his contract at \$10 million.

"He will honor his current contract at this time," Rosenhaus said.

In addition to 521 receptions for 7,861 yards and 79 touchdowns in 115 regular-season games, the five-time Pro Bowl selection has another 81 catches for 1,163 yards and 12 TDs in 16 playoff games.

Even without the prospect of adding Gronkowski, the tight end position was considered one of Tampa Bay's biggest strengths, with O.J. Howard and Cameron Brate teaming with Pro Bowl receivers Mike Evans and Chris Godwin to form the best collection of targets Brady has had to work with in more than a decade.

The Bucs are coming off a 7-9 finish and missed the play-



In this Dec. 13, 2015 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, left, celebrates with tight end Rob Gronkowski after they connected on a pass for a touchdown during the first half of an NFL game against the Houston Texans in Houston.

offs for the 12th consecutive season in 2019. They haven't won a postseason game since the franchise's only Super Bowl championship run 18 years ago.

Brady played in nine Super Bowls—winning six—in 20 seasons with the Patriots, who also appeared in 13 AFC championship games and won 17 division titles while the three-time league MVP was their primary starting quarterback.

A few days after signing with the Bucs in free agency, Brady said not only was he impressed with a talented young roster Tampa Bay has assembled in recent years, but what he sensed is a commit-

ment to do whatever necessary to be successful.

"I don't want to get into every process to the decision I was making at the time, but there were a lot of things that really were intriguing to me about the organization—the players, and the coaches and the willingness of everyone to try to accomplish what the goal of playing football is, which is to win," the four-time Super Bowl MVP said.

"I'm going to try to do everything I can in my position, and in what I am responsible for to make it happen," Brady added. "I've got to trust that everyone else is doing the exact same

thing. That part is no different from what I've experienced in 20 years of my own role."

Gronkowski was an All-Pro in 2011, 2014, 2015 and 2017. He had 43 receptions for 682 yards and three TDs in 2018, his final season with the Patriots.

Without his favorite target, Brady had one of his worst non-injury seasons last year, throwing for 4,057 yards with 24 TDs vs. eight interceptions.

The Patriots, nevertheless, won 12 games and extended their string of consecutive playoff appearances to 11 before a sputtering offense contributed to a first-round loss to the Tennessee Titans.

Tampa Bay sent a fourth-round selection (No. 139 overall) in the 2020 NFL draft in exchange for Gronkowski and a 2020 seventh-round pick (No. 241 overall).

"Rob Gronkowski is one of the best tight ends in NFL history, and he plays the game with the type of passion and desire that sets him apart," Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht said in a statement. "Rob has played his entire career alongside Tom Brady and their accomplishments speak for themselves. Together they have developed the type of chemistry on and off the field that is crucial to

success. Rob combines elite-level skills as both a receiver and blocker, but what really makes him special is the fact that he's a proven winner who brings that championship mindset and work ethic."

Gronkowski was one of five tight ends selected to the NFL 100 All-Time Team and one of two at his position chosen for the All-Decade Team for the 2010s.

Gronkowski and Brady spent nine seasons together in New England, combining for 78 touchdowns. That mark ranks second all-time among quarterback-tight end connections and is fifth in league history among all duos.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Leigh Steinberg's focus this week is rightfully on the three-day NFL draft, where new clients such as Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa and teammate Jerry Jeudy will learn where they will begin their professional careers.

It won't be long before Steinberg's attention is back on his most high-profile client.

After leading the Kansas City Chiefs to their first Super Bowl championship in five decades, quarterback Patrick Mahomes is finally eligible to sign a contract extension this offseason.

And while there is no hurry given the fact that Mahomes is entering just his fourth season in the league—and the Chiefs could simply pick up his fifth-year option—the reality is both sides are eager to come to terms on what could be a record-setting deal.

Chiefs, Mahomes eye record deal following draft

"We're not even worried about it at this point," Steinberg recently told The Associated Press in a wide-ranging interview. "He is preparing for next season and it'll work out how it works out."

That sounds reasonable. But for both sides, the benefits of getting a deal done this offseason far outweigh any benefits of kicking the negotiations down the road.

For the Chiefs, who have been bumping up against the salary cap, they would gain some cost certainty going forward. Mahomes is due to make just \$2.7 million this season as part of his rookie contract, but that number will rise dramatically once a deal gets signed. Just how much would help the organization plan for what it hopes

is a Patriots-like dynasty.

For the record-setting quarterback and his representatives, the extension would give them a big guaranteed payday before Mahomes takes the field again.

Remember when he dislocated his knee on a seemingly innocent quarterback sneak during a game against Denver?

It sent shivers down the spines of Chiefs general manager Brett Veach and coach Andy Reid, but also Steinberg and his team, who no doubt would prefer a deal gets done before Mahomes risks injury again.

"Pat and his agent, Chris (Cabot) and Leigh, they know Pat is a priority. Pat isn't going anywhere," Veach said. "Pat is going to be here a long time. I can

never sit here and speak in definitives, so I can't say that the fifth-year won't be an option or anything like that. It would be hard for me to see that we'd have to use that. We feel that it's a priority and when you have a great player, and that great player is a priority, things get done."

Just what the deal might look like is up for debate. Several former agents and GMs who spoke to the AP believe the starting point is Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, who signed a four-year extension worth \$35 million per year in new money that brought his total compensation to \$157 million over five years.

But the end point should be much higher: a five-year extension that eclipses \$200 million in new money, mak-

ing Mahomes the highest-paid player in the league by reaching the \$40 million-per-year benchmark.

It wouldn't be the first time Steinberg, the inspiration for the film "Jerry Maguire," set the market. The agent negotiated Warren Moon's league-high contract in 1989, then handled Troy Aikman's record-setting deal in 1993, before helping Drew Bledsoe shatter the mark again with a \$103 million, 10-year blockbuster prior to the 2001 season.

"Again, Pat is a priority. The way we look at it now with all that is going on, we're going to have a lot of time to work with," Veach explained ahead of this week's draft. "It's just hard to put a timetable on exactly when and how that will all

work out. But we know and I'm sure he knows that it will get done and it will be taken care of."

In the meantime, the Chiefs are doing everything they can to keep Mahomes happy.

That means keeping plenty of help around him.

Despite their tight financial situation, the Chiefs brought back wide receiver Demarcus Robinson and fullback Anthony Sherman in free agency. They added swing tackle Mike Remmers to the offensive line, then snagged tight end Ricky Seals-Jones and former Raiders running back DeAndre Washington to provide even more pop.

"Pat does some things that you can't coach," said Washington, who was teammates with Mahomes at Texas Tech, and who should enter training camp as the primary backup to Damien Williams.

Tokyo, IOC conflict over who pays for delay

TOKYO (AP)—An open conflict broke out between Tokyo Olympic organizers and the IOC on Tuesday over who will pay for the unprecedented year-long postponement.

Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya said the organizing committee asked the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee to remove a comment from its website suggesting that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed that Japan would shoulder most of the postponement costs.

Media reports in Japan estimate the year-long delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic will cost \$2 billion to \$6 billion. Neither side has given an official estimate, but Tokyo CEO Toshiro Muto has called the postponement costs “massive.”

“It’s not appropriate for the prime minister’s name to be quoted in this manner,” Takaya said on a 90-minute teleconference.

Almost all of the questions, mostly from Japanese reporters, centered on the IOC’s statement and the costs for Japan.

The IOC statement, on a page titled “Frequently Asked Questions about Olympic Games Tokyo 2020,” said Abe agreed that Japan “will continue to cover the costs it would have done under the terms of the existing agreement for 2020, and the IOC will continue to be responsible for its share of the costs.”

After Tokyo’s complaint, the IOC removed Abe’s name and any reference to Japan’s financial obligation. The edited version reads: “The Japanese government has reiterated that it stands ready to fulfill its responsibility for hosting successful games.”

Without using Abe’s name, IOC President Thomas Bach



said almost exactly the same thing 10 days ago in an interview with the German newspaper Die Welt on Sunday. He said Japan would “continue to cover the costs it would have done” under the agreement signed in 2013.

Abe’s spokesman, Yoshihide Suga, also challenged the IOC and said Tuesday there “is no such agreement related to additional cost stemming from the postponement.”

Despite the conflict, here is not much debate about who will pay; it’s the Japanese side, but it’s also a sensitive subject, particularly for Abe during an economic downturn brought on by the spreading virus.

Japan is officially spending \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics, but a government audit report says it’s at least twice that much.

It’s all public money except for \$5.6 billion from a privately funded organizing committee budget.

Under the terms of the Host City Contract signed in 2013 when Tokyo was awarded the games, the city of Tokyo, the Japanese Olympic Committee and local organizers are obligated to pay most of the costs of the Tokyo Games.

Section 68 of the contract reads: “Unless expressly stip-

ulated otherwise in this contract, all obligations of the city, the NOC and/or the OCOG pursuant to this contract, shall be at their expense.”

John Coates of Australia, an IOC member who oversees Tokyo preparations, said in a conference call last week with Tokyo organizers that the postponement would cost the IOC “several hundred million dollars.” Bach said the same thing to the German newspaper.

Coates made it clear the IOC’s payments would go to struggling national Olympic committees and

international federations—and not to Tokyo.

One of Coates’ solutions to help Tokyo was to cut frills from the program.

According to organizing committee documents, the IOC has already contributed about \$1.3 billion to organize the Tokyo Olympics. This is from income of \$5.7 billion in the latest four-year Olympic cycle.

Japan, with a \$5 trillion GDP, obviously has more resources.

Takaya also repeated there is no Plan B despite concerns by some scientists that the pandemic will not allow the Olympics to open in 15 months—July 23, 2021.

“We are not commenting

AP
A woman wearing a mask against the spread of the new coronavirus walks in front of the Japan Olympic Museum building in Tokyo Tuesday, April 21, 2020. An open conflict broke out Tuesday between Tokyo Olympic organizers and the IOC over how much to divulge about who will pay for the unprecedented year-long postponement.

on speculation,” Takaya said. “The new dates are already set. The Tokyo 2020 organizing committee and all stakeholders are now dedicating themselves to this new date.”

Meanwhile, the USA Track and Field has rescheduled its Olympic trials for June 18-27, 2021, at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon.

The national governing body for track announced the new dates Tuesday in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic postponing the Tokyo Olympics to 2021.

USATF worked with the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee and TrackTown USA to secure the new dates for trials originally scheduled for this June. The competition schedule remains the same, but the timing windows could be tweaked.

The trials will be held in a remodeled Hayward Field at the University of Oregon.

The USATF announced last week it has laid off seven people from its 65-person staff and that CEO Max Siegel would take a 20% pay cut to offset lost revenue due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The organization that runs the country’s largest summer sport has been forced to cancel dozens of events, including the Olympic trials. In 2016, trials produced around \$5 million in revenue.

SWITZERLAND (AP)—Soccer’s international governing body says it will maintain funding for women’s soccer despite concerns about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Following the Women’s World Cup last year, FIFA President Gianni Infantino pledged to invest \$1 billion in the women’s game over the next four years.

“In line with the FIFA Women’s Football Strategy and FIFA’s long-term vision for the development of women’s football, this funding will be invested into a range of areas in the women’s game including competitions, capacity building, development programs, governance and leadership, professionalization and technical programs,” FIFA said in a statement provided Tuesday to The Associated

FIFA’s support to women’s game will continue

Press. “We can confirm that this funding has already been committed by FIFA and will not be impacted by the current COVID-19 crisis.”

The Guardian first reported that FIFA’s funding would not drop because of the coronavirus.

FIFA also said it is assessing the financial impact the pandemic is having on soccer worldwide, including the women’s game, and is exploring possible ways to provide assistance.

“The exact format and details of this assistance are currently being discussed in consultation with FIFA’s member associations, the confederations and other stakeholders,” the organization said.

FIFA has said it sees a duty to offer a lifeline from its cash

reserves, last reported at more than \$2.7 billion, as the economic consequences of the pandemic ripple across global soccer.

“FIFA is in a strong financial situation and it’s our duty to do the utmost to help them in their hour of need,” the organization said in a statement late last month. “FIFA is working on possibilities to provide assistance to the football community around the world after making a comprehensive assessment of the financial impact this pandemic will have on football.”

Infantino reiterated the pledge in a video message to FIFA’s member associations.

FIFA’s commitment comes

after FIFPro, the international players’ union, called for continued financial support of women’s soccer worldwide. The union issued a report saying COVID-19 is “likely to present an almost existential threat to the women’s game if no specific considerations are given to protect the women’s football industry.”

There are early signs the pandemic is already taking a toll on the women’s game, in addition to the cancellation and postponement of league play and tournaments worldwide. In Colombia, Independiente Santa Fe suspended all player contracts for its women’s soccer team recently but said its men’s team would only see pay cuts.

The pandemic struck at a time when women’s soccer was on the upswing, boosted by the success of last year’s World Cup in France.

“We do have concerns about investments in the women’s game being dropped or reduced or precursors investments being withdrawn, ultimately, from the women’s game. We’re concerned that decision-makers might ignore the needs of women or exclude women’s football from recovering support programs,” said Amanda Vandervort, chief women’s football officer for FIFPro.

Meanwhile, the first trial held in Switzerland’s five-year investigation of corruption in soccer moved closer Tuesday to ending without a judgment amid problems running a court during

the coronavirus pandemic.

The Swiss federal criminal court said it extended a suspension of the prosecution—of three German organizers of the 2006 World Cup and a former FIFA secretary general from Switzerland—until next Monday.

On that same date, a statute of limitations will expire on fraud allegations linked to a 6.7 million euro (\$7.6 million) payment 15 years ago that implicated German soccer great Franz Beckenbauer.

The court said judges will decide after Monday how to proceed with the case.

The trial in Bellinzona briefly opened March 9 when defendants and witnesses—most at least 70 years old—were already unwilling to travel close to a coronavirus outbreak area on Switzerland’s border with northern Italy.



A-Rod, J-Lo strengthen bid for Mets



**N E W
Y O R K**

(AP)—Alex Rodriguez, once again, wants to be like Derek Jeter.

A-Rod and Jennifer Lo-

pez, who are engaged, have retained J.P. Morgan to represent them in raising capital for a possible bid for the New York Mets. The move was first reported by Variety

and confirmed to The Associated Press by a person familiar with the decision who spoke on condition of anonymity because it was not announced.

A three-time AL MVP, Rodriguez retired in August 2016 with 698 home runs, a .295 average and 2,086 RBI in 22 years. He was suspended for the 2014 season for violations of Major League Baseball's drug agreement and labor contract.

A-Rod, now 44 years old, earned about \$448 million as a player. The 14-time All-Star started his career with Seattle, signed a record contract with

Texas in December 2000, and then moved from shortstop to third base when he was traded from the Rangers to the New York Yankees ahead of the 2004 season.

Jeter, the Yankees captain and shortstop, retired after the 2014 season and was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame in January. He became CEO of the Miami Marlins as part of the team's sale from Jeffrey Loria to a group headed by Bruce Sherman in October 2017.

The Mets' ownership is headed by Fred Wilpon, brother-in-law Saul Katz and

Jeff Wilpon's son Jeff, the team's chief operating officer. The team said Dec. 4 it was negotiating an agreement with Steve Cohen. The hedge fund manager bought an 8% limited partnership stake in 2012 for \$40 million. The deal under discussion would have seen him acquire an 80% controlling share in a transaction that values the team at \$2.6 billion, and the Wilpons would have remained in place for five years.

The sides announced the deal's collapse on Feb. 6, and the Mets owners said they intended to find a new buyer. Allen & Co.

represents the Mets owners.

Given the drop in equities prices caused by the new coronavirus pandemic, the next few months figure to be a difficult time to raise money for a bid.

Dodgers to pay workers

Meanwhile, the Dodgers on Tuesday informed gameday workers missing paychecks because of the coronavirus pandemic that they will collectively receive \$1.3 million in financial assistance payments from the organization.

ROLLERS

From Page 20

her way of giving back to the club that has taught her not only about basketball, but other important things.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the Rollers Basketball Club. Keeping a close network and com-

municating with parents and players have helped everyone grow and also stay positive amid this pandemic. I am glad to be part of the Rollers family and I would always be there to help out when needed," said Lee, who used to play for Grace Christian Academy and Marianas High School before switching to coaching.

JORDAN

From Page 20

among the players that CNMI hoops buffs love to see go up against the NBA legend.

"Russell was a very good defender and Utah Jazz was a worthy finals opponent for the Bulls. Majority of their games in the 1998 Finals were close," said Nelson Samson, organizer of the 16-team One Pacific Promotional Basketball League, which is on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Out of the six games in the Bulls-Jazz title showdown, five were decided by no more than 5 points (Game 3 was the only blowout with Bulls winning, 96-54), and Russell, in earlier interview after the finals,

claimed most of Jordan baskets were not made against him.

Versus Pistons 'Bad Boys'

Before becoming his teammate, Jordan used to play against Dennis Rodman, who partnered with Bill Laimbeer in "tormenting" the Bulls main man.

"You know how aggressive and physical Rodman could be when defending and he got into Jordan's head a few times. He might look dirty when defending but effective most of time. Somewhat similar to Bruce Bowen of the Spurs and both received NBA's Defensive Player of the Year and All Defensive Team awards," said Jersh Angeles, a Jordan fan.

Rodman and Laimbeer car-

ried out the "Jordan Rules," and Isaiah Thomas (he and Joe Dumars also showed no love to Jordan) was the brain behind the plan to play merciless defense against the five-time NBA MVP.

It was that play that up to this day Jordan still hates Thomas, Charlie Rivera, a Celtics fans, believes.

"You just can't imagine how the Pistons 'Bad Boys' defended against Jordan that time," Rivera said.

Against the Pistons, there was no easy basket for Jordan. "Jordan got too much of Pistons' unforgiving defense that I think this prompted him to work on strengthening his body," Rivera added.

Magic, Payton, and Kobe

Jordan came to play in the NBA in 1984—the time where Magic Johnson was taking charge with the Lakers.

"It was a case of the king at that time and the rising star," Lakers fan James Lee said.

Jordan went on to face Johnson in the NBA Finals only once (1991) with the Bulls winning, 4-1.

Five years after Johnson's retirement, the Showtime fi-

nally found its new star in Kobe Bryant and how the straight-from-high-school rookie would fare against Jordan was among the frequent questions asked.

Bryant did not disappoint.

"Jordan was the king and Kobe was the rising star. It was kind of passing on the torch," said Lee, who also picked the Gary Payton-Jordan matchup.

"It was in the middle era of Jordan's career and Gary (Seattle SuperSonics) was perhaps the best defender against Jordan," the former CNMI National Team member said.

In the 1996 NBA Finals, the Bulls won the first three games against the Sonics. Payton, who was then nursing a calf injury, then took over the challenging job of guarding Jordan and the Sonics went on to win the next two matches. Still, the Bulls won the finals, 4-2, but not after Payton frustrated Jordan.

Starks and Miller

John Starks is another player included on Jordan's "not so favorite" list.

But if there's one that can challenge Jordan in a shoot-out, the New York Knicks gunner must be on the roster.

Jordan and Starks faced off in the 1993 NBA playoffs and got into each other's nerves on many occasions. Starks outgunned Jordan in 3-point shooting, 12-10, and emerged as the second best scorer for the Knicks (averaging 15.2 per game) behind Patrick Ewing (25.8). Jordan, as expected, led the Bulls with his 32.2 points average and they won the series, 4-2.

"I love watching Jordan matched up with John Starks and Reggie Miller. I love the physical and mental game they brought to the court," Carl Hocog said.

Of course, who would forget the Miller-Jordan altercation on Oct. 2, 1993. The incident happened after Miller went for a

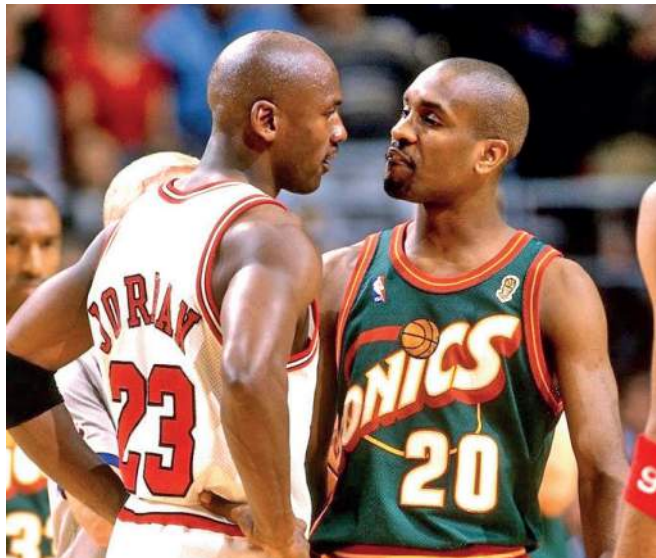
putback and on his way down, he bumped into Jordan, who then ran after the Pacers shooter. The next thing that happened was like an MMA scene, with Jordan and Miller grappling each other and their teammates and the referees trying to separate the two. They were eventually pacified, but not after Jordan landed a punch on Miller that resulted into a one-game suspension and \$10,000 fine slapped on the NBA great.

With *Last Dance* divided into a 10-part series and to be shown until next month, more Jordan and Bulls stories will be told, bringing basketball fans, especially the Bulls followers, back to the time Chicago managed to build a dynasty.



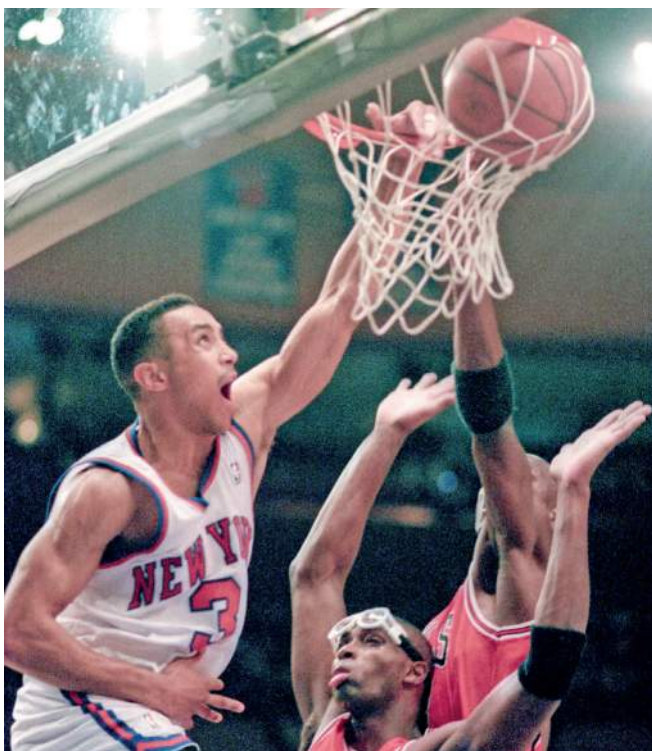
AP

In this undated file photo, the Detroit Pistons' Bill Laimbeer, second left, gives up a hard foul on the Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan during an NBA game in Chicago.



AP

The Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan, left, and Seattle SuperSonics' Gary Payton exchange heated words.



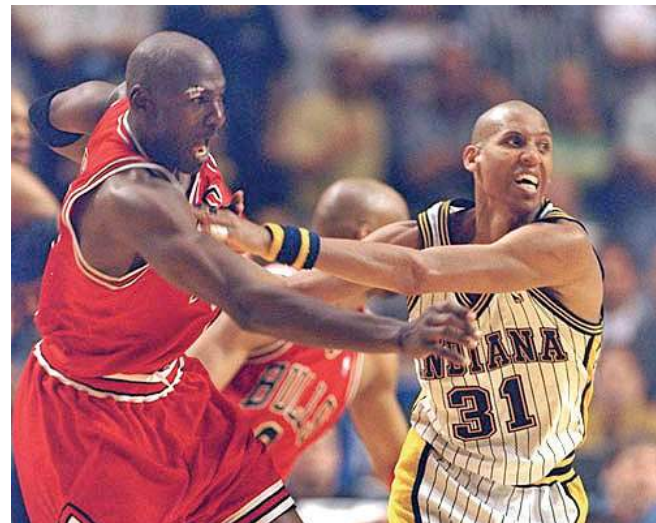
AP

The New York Knicks' John Starks, left, dunks over the Chicago Bulls' Horace Grant, center, and Michael Jordan.



AP

The Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan, right, defends against the Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant.



AP

The Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan, left, is pushed by Indiana Pacers' Reggie Miller.



Gronkowski
to reunite
with Brady in
Tampa Bay
PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

Tokyo, IOC
conflict over
who pays
for delay
PAGE 18



20 THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

'Standing up' against Jordan



AP

Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan makes a move against Utah Jazz's Bryon Russell in Game 6 of the NBA Finals in Salt Lake City, Utah.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

June 14, 1998, with less than 10 seconds left in Game 6 of the NBA Finals, Michael Jordan dribbled to his right toward the middle of the floor against pesky defender Bryon Russell of the Utah Jazz, stopped, and then crossed back for an open 20-footer that gave the Chicago Bulls the lead, 87-86, and eventually the title.

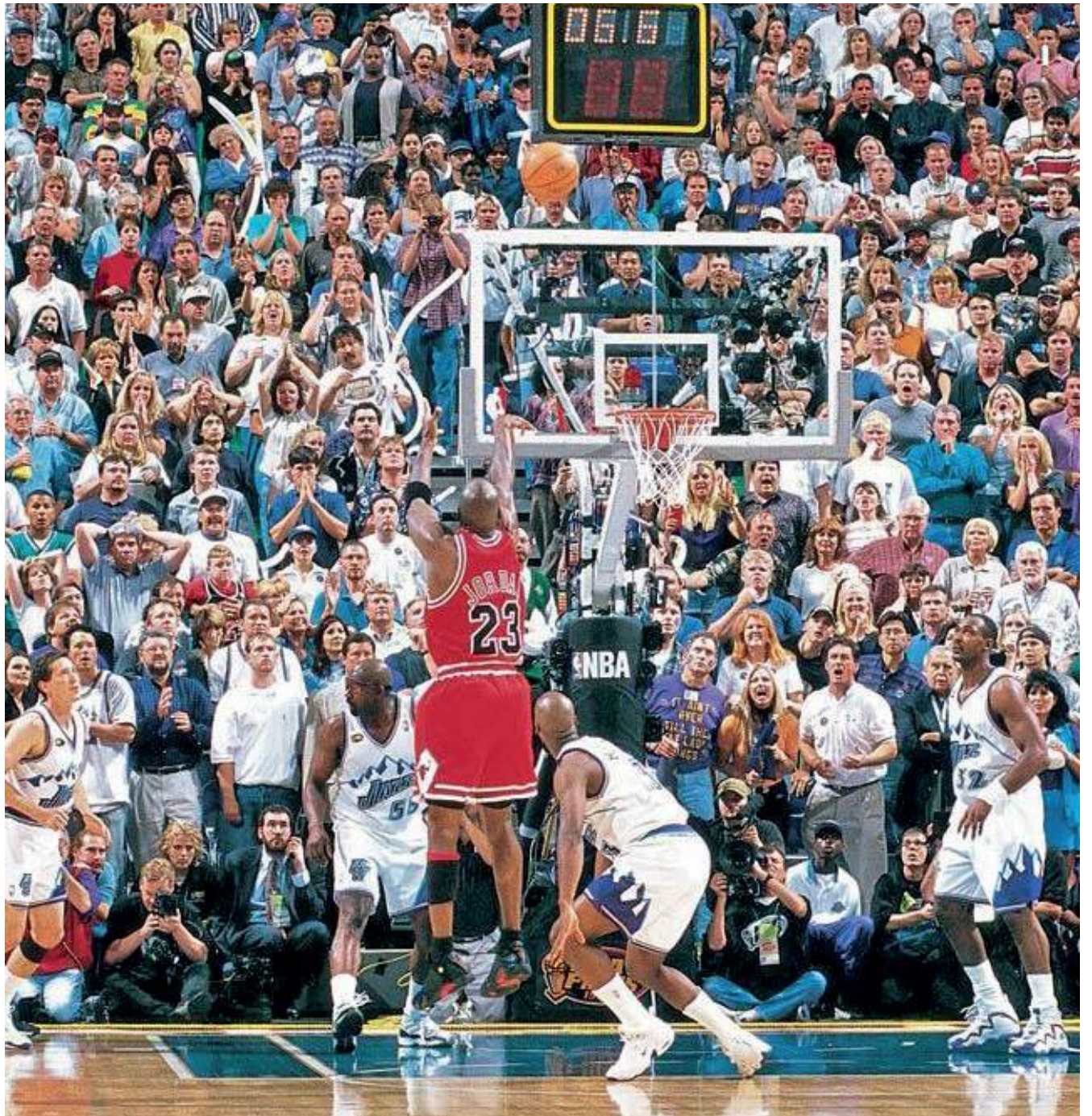


With basketball fans glued to *Last Dance*, a documentary about Jordan and the Chicago Bulls' last NBA championship, discussions on that game winner will surely come out anew. Actually, they never stopped, as until this day people are still debating whether Jordan

pushed off Russell to get free for the dagger or "His Airness" was just being himself, eluding defenders and making big-time shots like that.

Anyways, although Russell was on the unfortunate side of one of the many Jordan "immortalized" moments, he was

See JORDAN on Page 19



AP

In this June 14, 1998 file photo, Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan fires the winning basket in Game 6 of their match against the Utah Jazz in the NBA Finals in Salt Lake City, Utah.



CHEVY KATE ALIPIO

Dong A Wholesale's Jenny Lee, third left, Rollers Basketball Club coach Joe Diaz, left, and two other volunteers get ready for the drive thru distribution of relief packages to Rollers players and their families yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Rollers players receive relief packages

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Dong A Wholesale handed over relief packages to Rollers Basketball Club players and their families yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Dong A Wholesale's Jenny Lee, who is among the coaches of the Rollers women's team, led the distribution of the relief packages via drive thru system and was assisted by some Rollers officials.

"As part of the team, I

wanted to contribute to the association and the families that are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," Lee said.

More than 100 packages containing cup noodles, drinks, and snacks were given to Rollers players and their families. Dong A Wholesale had earlier made similar donations to front-liners responding to the crisis, like the staff of the Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Management System, and the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

Rollers founder and head coach Joe Diaz was at the dis-

tribution area and thanked Lee and her company and family for their generosity.

"We are very blessed to receive this kind of assistance. At these trying times we need all the help we could get. On behalf of the Rollers officers, president Juan Dela Cruz, vice president Norris Kwon, secretary Verna M. Diaz, and treasurer Sia Dela Cruz, and all the coaches and the players, we would like to say thank you very much to Dong A Wholesale," Diaz said.

Meanwhile, Lee said that helping out the group is also

See ROLLERS on Page 19